

Emotional changing of the guard at Ayala: Don Jaime turns over control to Jaza

QC Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza charged with graft by ex-employee

Oil firms announce another cut in LPG prices, 2nd in 7 days

President Bush authorized Iraq intel leaks, says ex-White House aide

Call centers to help wean RP away from OFW dollars

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE PHILIPPINES LOOKS TO THE BOOMING BUSINESS process outsourcing and call center industry to help wean it from its reliance on the money that overseas Filipino workers bring in and to boost its potential for economic growth, according to National Economic Development Authority.

The government will also be investing heavily in call centers. AS

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, April 8, 2006 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 121 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Prosecutor says he's no GMA gofer; judge says, 'Noted'

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE LONE ELECTRIC FAN in a corner of the courtroom could blow only a whisper of air and Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco was in a sweater. The fire in his



PROSECUTOR/A6

Cha-cha drive alarms CBCP

Pastoral letter scores 'haste' in people's initiative

By Christian V. Esguerra in Manila and Joey A. Gabieta PDI Visayas Bureau

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS Conference of the Philippines is alarmed by the administration-backed people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution and pave the way for a parliamentary system of government.

It said in a pastoral letter released yesterday that the exercise was "dangerously unclear and open to manipulation by groups with self-serving interests," and that "vigilance, education, [and] principled opposition may be necessary steps to take."

"We view with alarm the present signature campaign endorsed by the government," the CBCP president, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, wrote in behalf of the group's 122 members.

The bishops made clear that they were not against Charter change, but expressed reservations about the timing and supposed "haste" with which the

CHA-CHA/A15



TRAFFIC-STOPPING WHEELS

On her first term, Rep. Annie Susano (Lakas-CMD, 2nd District, Novaliches) comes and goes in great style. Here, she hops out of her Rolls Royce to attend the launch of the Barangay Food Terminal on Batasan Road, Quezon City. Her family owns the R.L. Susano Realty Corp.

New SC justice says court can reverse self

By Armand N. Nocum and Christine O. Avendaño

THE SUPREME COURT HAS been known to reverse itself on some issues, and it may do so on the issue of the people's initiative should it see the need.

That statement, indicating that the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo and others pushing for Charter change may yet claim victory in the controversial issue, was made by newly appointed Supreme Court Associate Justice Presbitero Velasco.

Speaking to reporters Thursday night after his Sigma Rho fraternity brothers hosted cocktails at the Makati Golf Club to honor him on his appointment, Velasco said the justices could reverse a decision depending on the facts surrounding a case.

"Of course, the high court can abandon an existing doctrine and come up with a new one," he said, when asked to comment on the recent observation made by former Associate Justice Vicente Mendoza that no Supreme Court decision was permanent because the tribunal could reverse itself "subject to the wisdom of the times."

Velasco pointed out that the tribunal had overturned its rulings on such cases as those in

NEW SC/A15

Even the dead got fertilizers, COA reports

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHAT USE WOULD THE DEAD have of fertilizers?

According to the final Commission on Audit report on the P728 million fertilizer fund scandal, even the nonliving and the non-farming were among the listed beneficiaries of fertilizers bought with the funds of the Girintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) program.

The COA also discovered that some of the 15 nongovernment organizations (NGOs) that received a total of P150.6 million in fertilizer funds were "ghost" organizations. They were either not registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission or could not be found in their declared addresses.

The audit body's consolidated report, dated March 31, 2006, was prepared by six auditors who

conducted a special audit and ocular inspections nationwide.

The report, which was submitted to the Senate last Tuesday, said the fertilizers bought with the P728 million fund were overpriced by 682 percent, or by P128 million.

The 33-page report said the Department of Agriculture did not set up any system of rules or guidelines to rationalize the distribution of the farm inputs.

"The lack of basic rules resulted in a hazy accountability for the government funds," the report said.

It said "deceased persons" and people who were not engaged in farming were included in the list of beneficiaries in the Ilocos region.

In Magsingal, Ilocos Sur, 103 listed recipients who were supposed to receive 366 bottles of fertilizers worth a total of P549,000

EVEN/A6

Judas was no villain, old document claims

WASHINGTON—JUDAS ISCARIOT, vilified as Christ's betrayer, acted at Jesus' request in turning him over to the authorities who crucified him, according to a 1,700-year-old copy of the "Gospel of Judas" unveiled on Thursday.

The Judas gospel was one of several ancient documents found in the Egyptian desert in 1970, was preserved and translated by a team of scholars and made public in an English translation by the National Geographic Society.

Its introduction says it is "the secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot."

"He's the good guy in this portrayal," said Bart Ehrman, a religion professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "He's the only apostle who understands Jesus."

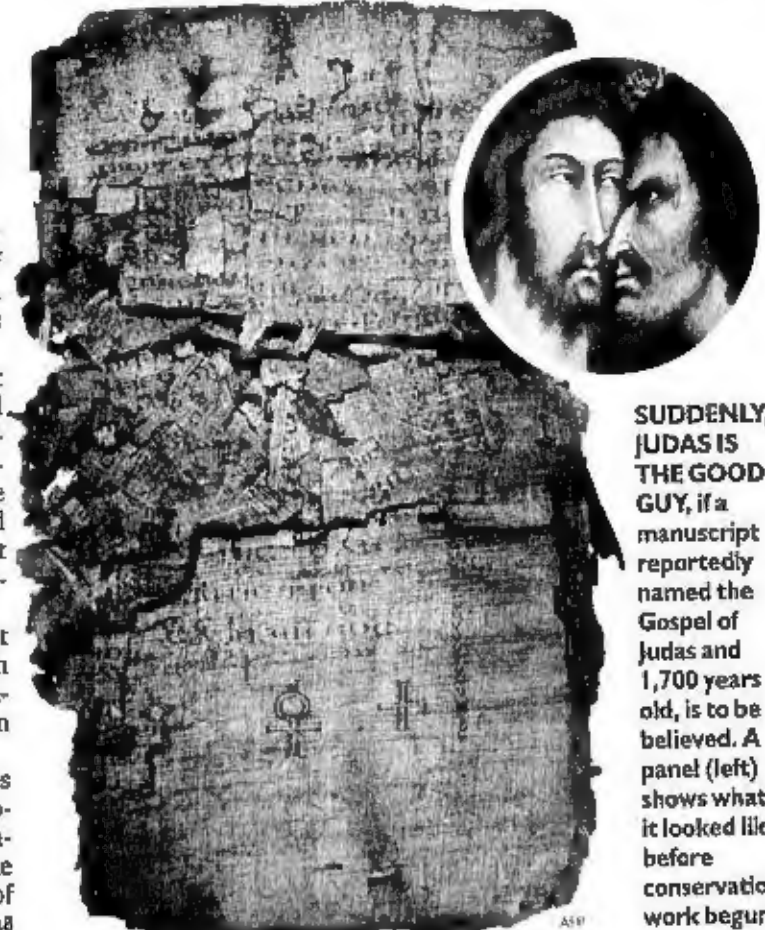
Later, it quotes Jesus as saying to Judas, "You will exceed all of them (the other disciples) for you will sacrifice the man who clothes me."

"The idea in this gospel is that Jesus, like all of us, is a trapped spirit, who is trapped in a material body," Ehrman said. "And salvation comes when we escape the materiality of our existence, and Judas is the one who makes it possible for him to escape by allowing for his body to be killed."

Rev. Donald Senior, president of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, said the document revealed the diversity and vitality in early Christianity.

"The question becomes ... does this tradition, this alternative story, if you like, in the gospel of Judas have a claim that in some sense is equal to the rival claim of

JUDAS/A8



SUDDENLY, JUDAS IS THE GOOD GUY, if a manuscript reportedly named the Gospel of Judas and 1,700 years old, is to be believed. A panel (left) shows what it looked like before conservation work begun.

Cop could not send 3 sons to college but rejects P300,000 bribe offer

By Luige A. del Puerto

WITH JUST TWO MORE YEARS to go before he retires, this police officer wants to leave the force with his integrity unscathed.

So he did what for him was the

only logical thing to do when wads of P1,000 bills, amounting altogether to P300,000 in bribe money, were placed on his table one Sunday afternoon last month—he turned it down.

Not only that, Insp. Pedro Ve-

lasco also filed a charge of bribery against the man whom he said offered him the money: Samuel Lee, the importer he had personally arrested hours earlier and who is now also charged with smuggling on

three counts.

For his act, this police officer with a gross monthly pay of P28,000 has earned the praises not only of his superiors but of his colleagues.

COP COULD NOT/A17



IN A ROYAL FIX. The tumban cometh for mother and daughter, Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas and Annabelle Rama, owners of Royal Era. PHOTOS

Ruffa, parents face raps for tax evasion

By Cynthia D. Balana and Armand N. Nocum

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue yesterday filed a tax evasion case against actress Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas and her parents for nonpayment of P3.28 million in income tax for 2003 and 2004 from the earnings of their company, Royal Era Entertainment Inc.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said the case, the 53rd filed with the Department of Justice under the bureau's RATE (Run After Tax Evaders) program, was based only on certain transactions made by the company.

Buñag said that the BIR was still looking into the other trans-

actions made by the company when it was first put up in 1996.

In its complaint, the BIR said that the company, along with its officers, namely, Gutierrez-Bektas (treasurer), Eddie Gutierrez (president) and mother Annabelle Rama (managing director), committed at least four violations of the Tax Code.

Gutierrez-Bektas is the wife of Turkish millionaire Yilmaz Bektas and was Second-Princess in the 1993 Miss World beauty contest. Her father Eddie was a famous actor in the '60s while her mother Annabelle was an actress.

The BIR said the company—which produces movies, TV shows, concerts, the pro-

RUFFA/A5

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/48/07/06

Second FRONT PAGE

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Manila	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Cloudy with Rain
Bagyo	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rain
Iligan	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rain
Laos	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rain
Clark	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rain
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rain
Laguna	Partly Cloudy	Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rain
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rain

52% want Comelec execs to quit

Poll says sentiment nationwide

MAJORITY OF FILIPINOS or 52 percent favor the resignation of Commission on Elections commissioners as a result of the still unresolved controversies surrounding the conduct of the May 2004 elections, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey.

This sentiment was shared by Filipinos across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes. But the sentiment was strongest in the National Capital Region (60 percent) and in Class ABC (56 percent).

Only 31 percent think the Comelec commissioners should not resign while 31 percent are undecided, the survey said.

'Garcia tapes'

In June 2005, tapes containing the alleged wiretapped conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and then Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano leaked out, plunging the President into the worst political crisis of her presidency.

Garcillano is now facing charges of perjury, falsification of public document and violation of the Passport Act filed by several

lawmakers, after a top official of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said that one of the passports Garcillano submitted to the Joint House inquiry on the "Hello Garcia" scandal was fake.

The BSP prints the passports and supplies them to the Department of Foreign Affairs which then issues the passports to applicants.

Poll irregularities

Earlier this month, Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra testified before the Senate committee hearing on the wiretapped conversations that the 2004 polls were "marred by irregularities."

The survey also found that opinions are split on whether national and local elective officials should be given a five-year tenure in office, with 52 percent favoring the proposal and 48 percent rejecting it. The same pattern was observed across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes.

Retain term limits

Meanwhile, two out of three Filipinos (62 percent) are opposed to proposals to lift the term limits for elected public officials.

From 59 to 65 percent of Filipinos across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes would reject any constitutional amendment that will allow elected officials to run as many times as they wish, the survey also showed.

The Pulse Asia survey was conducted from Feb. 18 to March 4 using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults 18 years old and above using multistage probability sampling with ± 3 percent error margin. *Kate Pedroso, PDI Research*

GMA appoints Sarmiento Comelec commissioner

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has filled one of three vacant seats in the Commission on Elections, announcing the appointment of human rights lawyer Rene Sarmiento as the newest Comelec commissioner.

The appointment of the 52-year-old Sarmiento, the deputy presidential adviser on the peace process for the past 12 months, came just days after former Supreme Court Justice Hilario Davide recommended that the President immediately fill up the vacancies in the scandal-tainted electoral body.

Sarmiento replaces Rufino S.

B. Javier who has just wound up his seven-year term at the Comelec.

This leaves two more vacancies to be filled after Mehol K. Sadain retired and Manuel Barcelona was bypassed by the congressional Commission on Appointments.

Davide became presidential adviser on electoral reform after his retirement late last year. He said the President needed to immediately fill up the vacancies so the process of rebuilding the Comelec could start. The poll body has been damaged by the "Hello Garcia" tape scandal, in the midst of which the President ad-

mitted to having talked to an election commissioner in the middle of the canvassing of the 2004 election results.

Sarmiento was a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission which drafted the 1987 Constitution and has served as consultant and member of the Presidential Human Rights Committee.

He has been extensively involved in the peace process. He was on the government panel during peace negotiations with the communist-led National Democratic Front during the Ramos administration in 1996.



RENE SARMIENTO

He was also involved in peace talks under the Estrada and Arroyo administrations. Last year, Ms Arroyo appointed him officer-in-charge of the Office of the Presidential Assistant on the Peace Process. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

US scores RP on rights violations

By Volt Contreras

AFTER A SCATHING NEW YORK Times editorial warned that Philippine democracy may be in danger under President Macapagal-Arroyo, now comes a US state department report citing "serious problems" the country have in upholding human rights.

The report which was submitted to the US Congress noted that while the Philippine government generally respected the human rights of its citizens, there were serious problems in some areas.

"Some elements of the security forces were allegedly responsible for extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, and arbitrary arrest and detention. The physi-

cal abuse of suspects and detainees remained a problem, as did police, prosecutorial, and judicial corruption," it noted.

The annual report titled "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The US Record 2005-2006" was posted by the US Embassy on its website yesterday.

It basically updated US lawmakers on the various efforts by their government to promote democracy and respect for human rights worldwide. These efforts have "resulted in positive change in 95 countries," the report said.

The report did not cite specific cases of abuse in the Philippines, but it covered the period that saw the Arroyo administration em-

ploying strong-arm measures against critics and the press to suppress ouster calls stirred by the "Hello Garcia" wiretapping scandal.

The report only made brief mention of Ms Arroyo's political crisis in a portion explaining the US-sponsored education program for selected officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"During the political turbulence in 2005, (the AFP's) senior leaders remained neutral and staunchly supported constitutional processes and civilian control over the military," it recalled.

In the Philippines, the report said, the US rights campaign focused on the police and military,

the judiciary, civil society, women migrant workers, people with disabilities, and Muslims who "historically have been victims of societal prejudice by the Christian majority."

The US government, for example, sent some 150 members of the Philippine National Police and other law enforcement officials to the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok for courses with human rights, ethics, rule of law and anticorruption components.

The US also organized numerous public conferences and gatherings throughout the year to promote interfaith dialogue among Filipino Muslims and Christians.

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Call centers to help wean RP away from OFW dollars

From page A1

in infrastructure, knowing how the country's shortcomings here may well turn off investors, said Dennis Arroyo, the Neda's director for policy planning and research.

"We'll slowly be replacing [earnings from] OFWs with BPOs [business process outsourcing] over the medium term," said Arroyo, in reaction to a cautionary report on the Philippine economy from the Asian Development Bank.

The ADB, in its annual Asian Development Outlook released on Thursday, warned that sluggish investments along with high dependence on consumption and overseas workers' remittances were stunting the Philippines' growth prospects.

Only 5% growth in '06

The regional bank's report predicted that Philippine gross domestic product would rise by only 5 percent this year against the government's down-scaled growth target of 5.5 to 6.2 percent and the 5.1 percent growth posted in 2005.

The ADB lamented that the country's growth performance was falling short of what was required to make "significant inroads into persistent high levels of poverty and unemployment."

Arroyo said the government was confident that the country could post a GDP growth of at least 5.5 percent this year.

"This growth target is even conservative given that we've had strong growth in the services sector led by telecommunications and the BPO/call center business," Arroyo said.

He said the telecom sector would remain competitive with the advent of the VOIP (voice over internet protocol), which allows users to make long distance calls using the Internet, and even 3G technology which allows real-time video broadcasting through the mobile phone.

Arroyo said OFW inflows would remain strong as it would be driven by the global aging phenomenon which would boost demand for migrant workers in industrialized countries.

By 2009 to 2010, the lucrative BPO sector would become even bigger, allowing the country to earn more foreign exchange without more Filipinos having to join the worker exodus abroad, Arroyo said.

Cost of migration

The ADB report warned that the high level of out-migration, though it generates high-remittance income, comes at a high cost to the country in terms of loss of knowledge and social problems.

Aside from call centers, Arroyo said the BPO sector would be boosted by other services such as medical and legal transcription, animation and software development.

The services sector, of which BPO is part, now accounts for about 48 percent of the country's domestic output, edging out agriculture and industry which respectively contribute 19 percent and 33 percent of GDP in 2005.

Arroyo also noted that OFW remittances were being directed into the stock market and even real estate.

"OFWs are looking more into investing in blue chips, especially now that the stock market is trading at a seven-year high," Arroyo said.

Shift to real estate

He said the shift of OFW money from pre-need plans to real estate would help the construction sector.

Cash remittances sent by OFWs through the banking system amounted to \$10.7 billion in 2005, 25 percent higher than the previous year, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

If inflows through informal channels were to be included, OFW remittances were estimated at about \$13 billion in 2005.

To address infrastructure bottlenecks, Arroyo said the government was committed to devoting a bigger portion of the annual budget to infrastructure spending.

"Now that we've implemented the VAT (value-added tax) reform, we have more resources for capital outlays," he said.

Enhance highway systems

A major priority is to enhance the highway systems connecting the three major economic growth areas of Luzon—the National Capital Region, the Clark-Subic development area and the Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon) growth corridor—whose combined output accounts for 55 percent of the country's GDP.

Based on Neda estimates, the Philippines needs P1.1 trillion (\$21.25 billion) in fresh investments from 2006 to 2010 to ease the gaps in transportation, power, water, communications and social infrastructure in the next five years.

According to Arroyo, the thrust is to encourage the private sector to undertake those projects "with positive financial and economic returns" while the government focuses on "essential projects with high economic returns despite poor financial viability."

Fiscal discipline

But to maintain fiscal discipline, the government will focus on projects that will not burden it with contingent liability and encourage the participation of local government units whenever feasible.

Of the amount required for infrastructure spending over the next five years, the national government is expected to shell out P171.56 billion from its budget and another P108.98 billion outside the budget (such as those involving LGUs), on top of its contribution to joint venture projects with the private sector.

Projects involving public-private partnership, or the build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme, are expected to amount to nearly P500 billion.

Arroyo said partial liberalization of air transportation in key areas as well as further improvements in the nautical highway system through the ro-ro (roll on, roll off) mode, would also boost the investment climate.

Ruffa, parents face raps for tax evasion

From page A1

motion of talents—and its owners committed the following violations:

- Unlawful pursuit of business.
- Royal Era was allegedly registered with the BIR only in 1998 when its operations started in 1996.
- Failure to file its corporate annual and quarterly income tax returns from 1998 to 2002 despite having produced several movies and concerts.
- Underdeclaration of income derived from millions of pesos in commissions received from GMA Network Inc. in its income tax returns by 40 percent in 2003 and 222 percent in 2004.
- Failure to update its registration

as an entity subject to value-added tax and failure to file the requisite VAT returns and pay its VAT dues.

Repeated requests

Buñag said a Letter of Authority was issued against the company for examination of its books of accounts and other accounting records for the questioned years.

Despite repeated requests, the company, however, failed to present its records.

Among the concerts produced by the company which the BIR was able to verify were: "Songs and Laughter Unlimited" (Dec. 7 and 8, 2001), "The Way We Are" (Oct. 26 and 27, 2001),

"One Night Stand Date" (Oct. 25 and 26, 2002), "Ara in a One Night Stand with Hajji" (Oct. 26, 2002) and "A Very Wholesome Show" (Oct. 25, 2002).

The company also produced several movies from 1998 to 2002, namely "Babae sa Cake" (1998), "Mga Lihim ni Alberto" (1998), "Babae sa Dilim" (1999) and "She Wants to be a Millionaire" (2001).

Delivering message

Buñag said it was clear that the repeated fraudulent and culpable acts of Royal Era were carried out by its owners knowing full well of the fraud intended to be committed against the government.

He also said the Gutierrezes pur-

posely registered their business entity as a non-VAT percentage tax type of business despite knowledge that it should have updated its business registration from non-VAT to VAT.

"It is not the amount of tax deficiency that matters but it is the message that we want to strongly deliver. The RATE program will not rest on its laurels. It will always be up on its feet running after tax evaders, whoever they are," Buñag said.

Other high-profile personalities who had been charged with tax evasion were singer Regine Velasquez, actor Richard Gomez, actress Judy Ann Santos and former Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.



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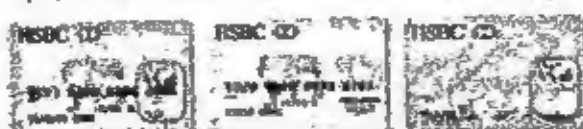
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Even the dead got fertilizers, COA reports

From page A1

were not residents of the municipality.

Also in the Ilocos, out of 1,332 names in the list of farmers-beneficiaries, 38 were listed twice while two barangay chairs signed confirmations but could not recall the number of bottles they received.

The documents also showed "blatant falsifications," according to COA.

"There were instances when intended beneficiaries were not identified at the outset and neither was any list of recipients attached to provide a mechanism for verification," it said.

Random sampling

The COA auditors conducted random sampling in three regions—Ilocos, Central Visayas and Northern Mindanao. They discovered that 42 percent of the 4,437 bottles of fertilizers for distribution in these regions "were not received either by the farmers themselves or by the barangay chairmen."

There were 1,841 bottles of fertilizer worth P2.72 million that did not reach

their recipients, the report said.

In both Ilocos and Northern Mindanao regions, it was found that some of the beneficiaries only received their fertilizers in November 2005 although the funds for their purchase were provided in 2004.

The report noted that the implementors of the GMA program did not coordinate with the city and municipal agriculture offices (MAOs) and barangay chairs, which they needed to do "to identify qualified beneficiaries."

This was apparently not provided for in the memorandums of agreement that the DA's regional field units signed with the local government units or the NGOs for the distribution of the farm inputs.

Dubious NGOs

The auditors found that some of the 13 NGOs that received funding were of "dubious legitimacy."

"Of the 13 NGOs, only five were holding offices in their addresses of record in Metro Manila, five NGOs and one suppli-

er could not be located, and four NGOs had no certificates of registration filed with the (SEC)," the report said.

The four NGOs without SEC registration papers were: the National Organization for Agricultural Enhancement and Productivity (it received P27 million from the DA, not including the fertilizer funds given by LGUs); the Ikaw at Ako Foundation of Barangay Binanuan, Talisay, Camarines Norte (P8 million); the Kabus nga Mag-uuma ug Mangat Foundation in Cebu City (P5 million); and The Workers' Cooperative of the Philippines in General Santos City (P5 million).

The report said the following NGOs could not be found in the addresses they gave: the Gabaymasa Development Foundation in Quezon City (P32 million); the Las Marias Foundation (P5 million) in Caloocan and Quezon City; Silcap Yaman Foundation (P4.9 million); the Philippine Environment and Ecological Development Association (P1.95 million); and the Bukid Tanglaw Livelihood Foundation (P10 million).

These same NGOs also disregarded

the requirement of conducting a public bidding for the purchase of fertilizers, the COA said.

Exclusive distributors

"Not being government entities, they were not bound by the procurement reform law despite the fact that they were spending public funds," the report said.

It said a canvass of the prices of the foliar fertilizers that the NGOs bought "disclosed that the other brands of foliar fertilizer were available in the market and sold at lower prices than those paid by NGOs/POs."

"This availability only proved that foliar fertilizer was a common item and that it was readily available in the market so that awards of purchase contracts through negotiation with so-called exclusive distributors was not justified," the report said.

The Philippine Social Development Foundation, which received P28 million, bought P5 million worth of fertilizers in Misamis Occidental and distributed these "without [a] list of beneficiaries."

The auditors found 169 vouchers for disbursements, amounting to P487 million, that were approved by regional executive directors and DA regional field unit signing officers "despite the fact that the individual amounts disbursed exceeded their signing authority."

Split payments

"Some 149 check payments totaling P116 million appeared to be split in order to keep the amounts within their signing authority, thereby avoiding action by a higher authority," it added.

The COA report also found that the DA regional field unit in Southern Tagalog bought 14 units of fabricated mechanical equipment for P14 million "without the benefit of public bidding." It noted that these were not classified as farm implements under the GMA program.

Six of the 14 units were found to have been overpriced by P2.75 million.

"While all 14 units were found during field visits, only eight were operational," the report said.

Prosecutor ...

From page A1

voice seemed to evoke the oppressive heat of the room.

"We do not care about what the President says, specifically President Macapagal-Arroyo," Velasco said in a voice raised to an emotional pitch. "We do not care about what the Secretary of Justice says ... We have our own minds. We do not depend on them, your Honor. We depend on our principles and the Constitution."

Presiding Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorio raised grunts of amusement when, responding to Velasco's seemingly inspired rhetoric, she said casually and with a smile: "Noted."

Velasco's courtroom outburst yesterday was triggered by chief defense lawyer Romeo Capulong's claim that the rebellion charge against his client, Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran, was a "bogus" case filed upon the dictates of Malacañang.

"He (Beltran) was detained and charged haphazardly through scripted inquest proceedings," said Capulong. He accused Ms Arroyo and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez of prejudging the case, based on their statements to media.

"We do not care what the President or Secretary Gonzalez says," said Velasco, denying the prosecutors were following a script. "We only look at evidence. If there's evidence, we file a case."

Velasco, head of Task Force Rebellion composed of public prosecutors and organized at the height of terror bomb attacks around the country last year, said his team had filed cases against even people belonging to the administration.

Oratory and laughter

Since Beltran's arrest last month, Capulong has filed several motions questioning the indictment against his client and accusing the prosecution panel of rushing its case.

Among others, the defense has asked the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 137 to release the 73-year-old defendant and dismiss the charges against him, or order his transfer to a private hospital better equipped to handle his medical needs.

But the prosecutor's fiery delivery was doused by laughter from the audience of about 30 people, most of whom were Beltran's supporters.

It was Velasco who prosecuted and secured death sentences for two confessed Abu Sayyaf members and an Indonesian terror suspect over the Feb. 14, 2005 bombing in Makati City, which killed four people.

Power of superiors

Capulong was unimpressed by Velasco's arguments.

"I hope that is true, but unfortunately their actions belie what they said in court," Capulong told reporters.

"The career of public prosecutors depends a lot upon their superior and the incumbent President. If those are the pronouncements of their superiors, can you expect these young career people to do otherwise? Can I believe that these were not personally handpicked by Gonzalez to railroad the filing of these charges?" said Capulong.

Beltran has been detained since March 2 at the Philippine National Police General Hospital. He and rebel soldier 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan are accused of plotting with communists to overthrow the administration.

The judge gave both parties until Wednesday to file their additional evidence or comments on pending motions.

Corrections

IN THE APRIL 1 issue, a letter to the editor on Page A14 of the Opinion section—"Missing out on the best president"—misstated that Arturo T. Valdez was a former transportation and communication secretary. He was a former undersecretary of the department.

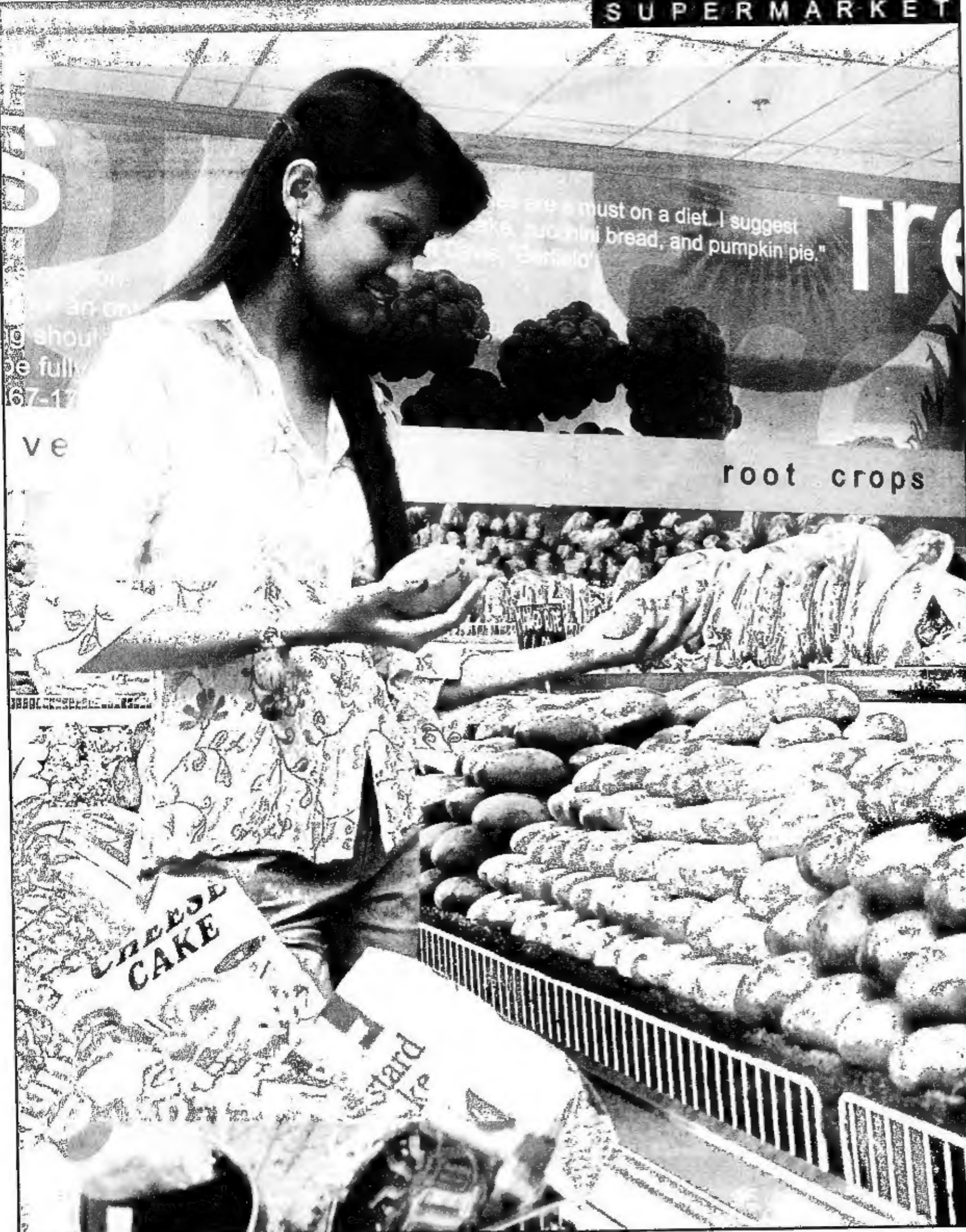
IN YESTERDAY'S issue, an article on Page A13—"Customs, DOF rethink revamp"—misstated the day Bureau of Customs officer in charge Alexander Arevalo received the order to direct the reshuffled officials to return to their former posts. Arevalo received the order on Monday, April 3—not Friday, March 31.

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WHERE THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS WAS FOUND: Photograph released by the National Geographic Magazine on Thursday shows caves north and east of El Minya, Egypt. The manuscript is now on exhibit in Washington, DC. AP/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Judas was no villain, ancient document claims

From page A1

the gospel tradition?" Senior said.

It is not known who wrote the Judas gospel. The copy unveiled on Thursday was a document mentioned critically in the year 180 in a treatise called "Against Heresies," written by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon in what was then Roman Gaul and now France.

The bishop denounced the manuscript as heresy because it differed from mainstream Christianity. The actual text had been thought lost until this discovery.

Elaine Pagels, a professor of religion at Princeton University, said, "The people who loved, circulated and wrote down these gospels did not think they were heretics."

Let the debates begin

Added Senior: "Let a vigorous debate on the significance of this fascinating ancient text begin."

In the Bible's New Testament, Judas is portrayed as the quintessential traitor, accepting 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus by identifying him to Roman soldiers. The biblical Gospel of St. Matthew says Judas quickly regretted his treachery, returned the silver and hanged himself.

The New Testament contains four Gospels—of Matthew, Mark, Luke

and John—but many more so-called apocryphal gospels were written in the first centuries after Christ's death, attributed to such disciples as Thomas and Philip and to his female follower Mary Magdalene.

Hidden in desert

Ehrman, Senior and other experts on Christianity spoke at a briefing at the National Geographic Society, which unveiled a translation of the Judas gospel and which helped authenticate, preserve and translate the document.

The leather-bound copy of the gospel was written in Coptic script on both sides of 13 sheets of papyrus, and spent most of the past 1,700 years hidden in a cavern in the Egyptian desert, said Terry Garcia of the National Geographic Society.

This document was probably copied from the original Greek manuscript around the year 300, Garcia said. Discovered in the 1970s near Minya, Egypt, the volume—including the gospel and other documents—was sold to an Egyptian antiquities dealer in 1978.

Crumbled into 1,000 pieces

The dealer offered it for sale without success, and eventually locked it in a bank safe deposit box in Hicksville, New York, for 16 years,

which hastened its decay.

In images displayed at the briefing, the papyrus looked like brown, dry autumn leaves.

Garcia said it had crumbled into more than 1,000 pieces.

In 2000, it was bought by a Zurich-based antiquities dealer Frieda Nussberger-Techacos. Concerned about the rapidly deteriorating condition of the manuscript, she transferred it to the Maecenas Foundation for Ancient Art in Basel, Switzerland, in February 2001 for preservation and translation.

Piecing together the fragile 26-page Gospel of Judas, written on both sides of 13 sheets of papyrus, was "one of the most complex puzzles ever devised by history," the National Geographic said.

In the next years, scientific tests—including radiocarbon dating, ink analysis and multispectral imaging—showed the document was copied down around 300.

The Judas gospel is being published in book form by National Geographic and pages from the papyrus manuscript will be on display at the society's museum in Washington starting on Friday. The manuscript will ultimately be housed at the Coptic Museum in Cairo. Reuters, AFP AP and New York Times News Service

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Police nab 2 suspects in 16 kidnapping cases

By Luigi A. del Puerto

TWO MEN ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN AT least 16 kidnap-for-ransom cases in Metro Manila and Luzon were arrested by the police on Tuesday in Leyte.

The police nabbed Jonathan Rinos, 30, and his brother Gerardo Rinos, 43, in Javier town in Leyte on April 4 on the strength of an arrest warrant issued by a court in Bulacan for kidnapping and robbery.

Jonathan was also allegedly involved in the murder of kidnap victim Shirmon Choa in Valenzuela City in August last year.

Judge Guillermo Agloro recommended no bail for the kidnapping charge.

Two of the Rinos brothers' alleged male victims, both from the Filipino-Chinese community, yesterday showed up at the headquarters of the Presidential Anti-Crime Emergency and Response to identify the arrested suspects.

The duo's arrest earned the praises of the Filipino-Chinese community, one of the sectors most vulnerable to kidnapping in the Philippines.

Anticrime advocate Teresita Ang-See said that victims are becoming "proactive" in the campaign against KFR groups. After their ordeal, they now give leads and other crucial information to the police.

"Gradually, we are seeing victims who are now ready to ... give a face to the trauma of kidnapping," said Ang-See, head of the Citizens Action Against Crime.

For the year, the police have recorded 12 KFR cases so far.

Ang-See also praised the police for the death



VICTIMS point their fingers at two alleged members of a kidnap-for-ransom gang who were presented to the media in Camp Crame Friday by PNP Chief Arturo Lomibao, center. Seated at left is anti-crime advocate Teresita Ang-See.

JOHN BONDOL

of Peter Sorima during a shootout on March 24 in Taytay, Rizal.

One of Sorima's alleged victims, a female Filipino-Chinese, surfaced that week to identify him as one of her abductors, according to Pacer chief Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon.

Sorima was involved in at least six KFR cases. His group was also responsible for the death of businessman Arturo Picones a few years back, according to CAAC.

Since Sorima's death on March

24, the CAAC said there had been no case of kidnapping. Kidnappers, the group said, appeared to be "lying low" after the death and arrest of several of their colleagues.

"We hope it stays that way," remarked police chief Director General Arturo Lomibao.

Lomibao yesterday announced the spot promotion of five officers and 11 of their men who shot it out with Sorima and three other kidnap suspects in Taytay, Rizal in March.

He also said the promotion of

two other Pacer officers, superintendents Edgar Iglesia and Guillermo Eleazar, who are always in the front line has been approved by the Senior Officers Placement and Promotion Board.

The promotion of Iglesia and Eleazar was long due, he said. But while Ang-See commended the police, she hoped the government would pour its resources, such as the putting up of reward money, in going after criminals and not the so-called destabilizers.

"I hope the government will not waste its money ... giving rewards for (the arrest of) destabilizers. (The government should) run after the criminals first."

She noted that KFR cases peaked in Febru-

ary and March, when the police were busy going after alleged destabilizers out to overthrow the Arroyo regime.

Criminals always "capitalize" on issues that distract the police from their work, according to her.

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More oil firms announce cut in prices of cooking gas

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MORE OIL COMPANIES YESTERDAY ANNOUNCED another reduction in the prices of cooking gas by P1.68 a kilo or P18.50 per 11-kilogram cylinder effective yesterday.

The price cuts, the second in a week and the sixth in the last five weeks, bring the total reductions in the price of liquefied petroleum gas to P6.72 a kilo or P73.92 per 11-kg tank, which most households use.

Petron, Total Philippines, Chevron Philippines and Philipinas Shell Petroleum said the latest round of price cuts was meant to further reflect in the local prices the significant decrease in international contract prices of LPG.

These oil companies produce LPG and sell them under the brands Gasol, Total-gaz, Caltex LPG and Shellane, respectively.

On Thursday, independent LPG refillers and

retailers belonging to the LPG Marketers Association cut their prices by the same amount, saying it was part of their group's efforts to let more consumers feel the downtrend in international market prices.

According to the Department of Energy, prices of 11-kg cylinders now retail at between P427.50 and P483 each, especially in Metro Manila.

The DOE said international contract prices for LPG have been steadily going down from a record high of \$625.50 a ton in February due to the cold weather in the relatively more populated Northern Hemisphere.

Contract prices went down to \$428 a ton this month, a record drop of \$102 a ton from \$530 in March, as winter came to a close.

Last week, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had said consumers could expect lower prices as decreasing world prices meant a similar movement in local prices.



Erap seeks court OK to hear birthday Mass

FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada on Thursday asked the Sandiganbayan Special Division for permission to attend a morning Mass to celebrate his 69th birthday on April 19.

Estrada, through legal counsel Rene Saguisag, said he wants to attend Mass at the St. Peter's church along Commonwealth Avenue with his supporters before he proceeds to the Sandiganbayan for his plunder trial.

The former president's birthday falls on a Wednesday, which is also the scheduled regular hearing day of his criminal cases.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio posed no objection to Estrada's request but added his approval is subject to the security assessment of the Philippine National Police.

"St. Peter's is a public place and there are security issues that must be considered," Villa-Ignacio explained.

In response, the anti-graft court asked the PNP to comment on Saguisag's request.

Estrada, who is also facing perjury charges, is in his fifth year of incarceration in his sprawling rest house in Tanay, Rizal. Nelson R. Flores

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Buck-passing continues over military's Hello Garci' report

Defense chief says authors will explain

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE BUCK-PASSING OVER A REPORT on the military's involvement in the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal continues.

After sitting on the report for over two months, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. passed the burden of explaining the findings back to the report's authors.

The five-man fact-finding board headed by Navy chief Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga will do the explaining if and when President Macapagal-Arroyo decides to make public the findings on the involvement of ranking officials in alleged cheating in the 2004 elections.

"The [members of the] fact-finding body will be the one to discuss that since they know its contents. They will be the ones to inform the public about the findings," Cruz told reporters recently.

Earlier, Cruz said it was up to Ms. Arroyo whether the so-called Mayuga report would be made public, claiming it was a matter of "national security."

Rather than have Malacañang do it, the Mayuga board would report the outcome of the report, which according to official indications did not touch on allegations raised against some generals.

The other members of the fact-finding board were Commodore Emilio Marayag, Brig. Gen. Romeo Alamillo, Col. Caridad Aguilar and retired Maj. Gen. Raul Relano.

The investigation began late July and ended in October last year, but the report was withheld from public despite the unrest among troops over allegations that the military was used in election cheating.

Mayuga reportedly submitted his report to Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga on Jan. 20, more than two months beyond the original November deadline.

Senga passed the responsibility of releasing the report to Cruz, who received the report from Senga in late February.

Cruz had said he would forward the report to Malacañang by end of March. He submitted the report on April 5.

Among those mentioned in the "Hello Garci" wiretapped tapes were Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon, retired Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, retired Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Aminkadra Salahuddin Undug.

Also mentioned in the tapes were Philippine National Police chief Director Arturo Lomibao and his pre-

decessor, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane.

While Esperon and Habacon were promoted and Kyamko was given a position in government after retirement,

Gudani was ordered court-martialed for defying a Malacañang "gag order" against testifying in a Senate inquiry into election irregularities in Lanao del Sur.



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Palace to present 'surprise witness' in new video

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACANANG WILL PRESENT A "SURPRISE witness" in a second video documentary it will release to the public next week.

The witness is expected to buttress the government position on the alleged conspiracy to bring down the Arroyo administration on that fateful day of Feb. 24.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday chose to be mysterious about the identity of the witness as well as to what this person would be saying, at least ahead of the release of the new Palace documentary.

Bunye told reporters it was better to watch the new 15-minute documentary on Monday when Palace officials would be holding a viewing of the video at the Palace briefing room.

The Palace had invited Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Genoroso Senga, heads of AFP major services and representatives of the Philippine National Police, to attend the viewing of the documentary.

"This second video will give more details on the intricate plot to topple this government... and we will present a surprise witness who will corroborate the earlier assertions that we made regarding this left-ring conspiracy," Bunye told reporters.

The video documentary has been titled "Sabwatan sa Katakusan," a follow-up of the first documentary "Pagiabang sa Katakusan: 1017," which Palace officials released on March 3 when President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the State of Emergency it had declared on Feb. 24.

The first video documentary had detailed the alleged conspiracy between elements of the right and left and their political supporters to topple the government and put in place a civilian-military junta. It also detailed the dates that these groups set in carrying out their alleged objectives.

But Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor told the INQUIRER that the surprise witness was "one of the core leaders" of the Magdalo Group, the group of young military officers who allegedly conspired with the Communist Party of the Philippines in the latest attempt to unseat President Arroyo.

All Defensor could say was that the surprise witness made "surprising revelations."

Bunye said that President Arroyo already has a copy of the new video but he did not know whether she had viewed its contents. He said he had already seen the video.

Asked why the Palace was releasing a second video, Bunye said some developments had taken place recently and the public needed to be informed about them.

He mentioned the recent capture of a conspirator to the Feb. 24 coup plot, referring to Army Capt. Dante Langkit, who was arrested last week by government agents in Quezon City.

Bunye said that authorities also seized some documents from Langkit and this "would be discussed in the video."

"There are new information that has come out and its important that we give these details out so that the public would have a wider understanding of the situation in our country," he told reporters.

Bunye said the release of the first Palace documentary had caught a "lot of interest" when it was made available in the government web sites.

Asked whether this inspired the government to release a second video, he maintained that the government just saw it important to inform and educate the public.

In a phone interview, Defensor said that the new video would "substantiate what transpired last Feb. 24," including the alleged alliance of the right, left and their political supporters.

Defensor said the government was putting out another video documentary again because "the public would better understand the situation in the country."

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Saturday, April 8, 2006
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Ex 37:21-28
Gospel: John 11:45-57

Many of the Jews who had come with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw what he did, but some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees called the Sanhedrin Council.

They said, "What are we to do? For this man keeps on giving miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, all the people will believe in him and, as a result of this, the Romans will come and sweep away our Holy Place and our nation."

Then one of them, Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all nor do you see clearly what you need. It is better to have one man die for the people than to let the whole nation be destroyed."

In saying this Caiaphas did not speak for himself, but being High Priest that year, he foretold as a prophet that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather unto one the scattered children of God. So, from that day on, they were determined to kill him.

Because of this, Jesus no longer moved about freely among the Jews. He withdrew instead to the country near the wilderness and stayed with his disciples in a town called Ephraim.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand and people from everywhere were coming to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the Passover. They looked for Jesus and as they stood in the Temple, they talked with one another, "What do you think? Will he come to the festival?" Meanwhile the chief priests and the elders had given orders that anyone who knew where he was should let them know so that they could arrest him.

Commentary

God tells Ezekiel that he will bring the scattered peoples back, deliver them from their sins of apostasy and all their evil and violence. He will make them a covenant of peace, make everlasting sanctuary among them, and all the nations will know that God dwells with them. This covenant is a person who is Peace, who brings us all back to communion with God and one another, who brings us back from the dead to everlasting life, known now in baptism/confirmation and eucharist in the Body of Christ. The raising of Lazarus is the image of all of us saved for life now and because of this power of life, there are those who seek to kill Jesus.

Do we stand with those who bring life or with those who decide that someone must die for the sake of the people? Clearcut and deadly. We must choose.



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OPINION

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Laggard

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SPEAK OF THE strong peso and the resurgent stock market not only as if they were signal achievements but powerful engines that would propel the country to the long-awaited economic takeoff. "The strong peso represents a resurging economy," Presidential Adviser Gabriel Claudio was quoted as saying earlier this year. "Eventually it is the peso that will silence detractors of the government and their destructive type of politics."

EDITORIAL

Claudio should just stick to politics. Very few people with some familiarity with economics would agree that a strong peso is an unqualified blessing. In fact, several economists have been warning that the strong peso has weakened the competitiveness of Philippine exports aside from diminishing the purchasing power of families who depend on the remittances of overseas workers. And many of them have called for some form of intervention to moderate the rise of the currency.

But isn't the strong peso driving economic growth? Not at all, according to the Asian Development Bank. On the contrary, the high dependence on foreign exchange remittances and consumption, together with sluggish investments, is weighing down the Philippine economy, the ADB said in its latest "Asian Development Outlook." And whatever growth the country has achieved is not really something to crow about—not by Asian standards especially.

For this year, the ADB sees the Philippine gross domestic product growing by 5 percent—a shade slower than last year's 5.1 percent growth rate but way below the government's forecast of between 5.5 and 6.2 percent—and inching up to 5.3 percent in 2007. Such growth rates put the Philippines among the very few economic laggards of Asia, ADB senior economist Jesus Felipe has pointed out.

How badly it is lagging can be seen from a comparison with the ADB's growth forecast for the region. The bank projects Southeast Asia's GDP to expand at 5.5 percent this year, accelerating to 5.7 percent next year. On the other hand, the Asian economy as a whole will grow at a much faster rate of 7.2 percent this year and slow down somewhat to 7 percent the following year. China and India will lead the charge with growth rates of 9.5 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively, this year; and 8.8 percent and 7.8 percent the following year.

If having one of the slowest growth rates in the region already looks bad, what makes things even worse is that no takeoff is in sight. "There is no immediate prospect of a significant improvement in the growth outlook," says the ADB report. Looking a little further into the future, it predicts the growth rate to move within the range of 5 to 6 percent until the year 2010. Felipe said the Philippine economy "has only marginal scope for fiscal or monetary maneuver to support demand and growth."

In other words, there is little government can do to spur higher growth rates in the next few years. But that is not an excuse for government to do nothing. What the country needs are more investments to drive growth. "No investment, no growth," Felipe said. Further improvements in tax collection and further reductions in the budget deficit could strengthen economic stability, the ADB says. "To invigorate investment, momentum must build behind reforms."

From sick man to laggard—that's how far the country has progressed in the last few years. And that should be a sobering thought for government officials who keep boasting about how great the government fiscal reforms have been and how the peso has become stronger, and how the Philippine stock market has become the best performer in the region.

Fair share

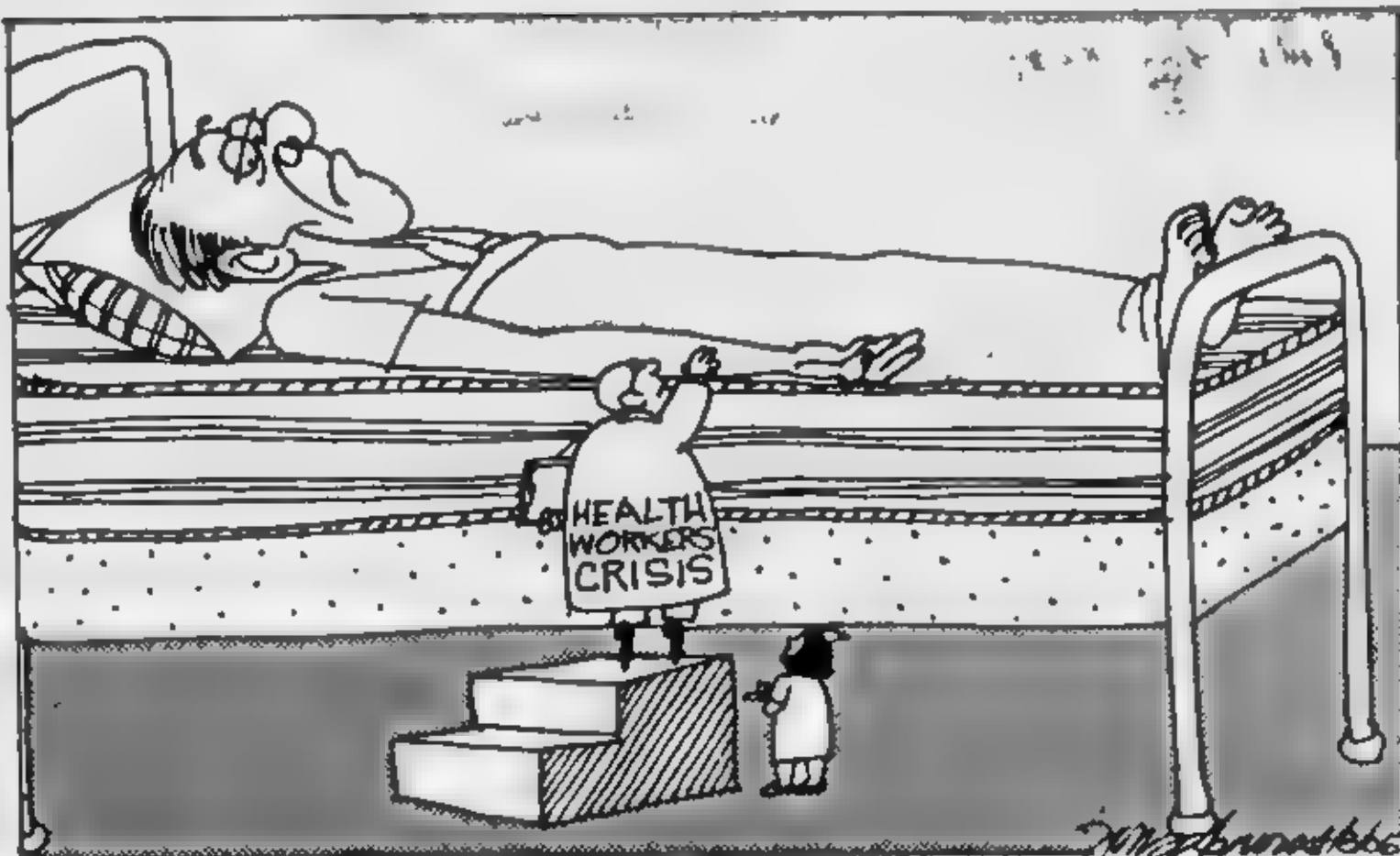
HOW SHOULD JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES split the bill for the planned transfer of 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa Prefecture to Guam?

The transfer of the 8,000 US Marines to Guam will provide a great opportunity to reduce the burden imposed on the Okinawa Prefecture. Given this, Japan has good reason to pay its fair share of the costs of the relocation.

FOREIGN COMMENT

However, the US demand for Japan to foot 75 percent of the bill should be seen as extremely disproportionate. Tokyo has no reason to accept this one-sided demand from Washington. Japan should not pay for the construction of facilities unrelated to the transfer of US Marines. The government should demand that the United States ... clearly state the grounds for its estimate of the relocation costs.

Yomiuri Shimbun (Tokyo)



Abolish the Comelec

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE PRESENT Constitution, by whatever method this is done, should include the abolition of the Commission on Elections as the most vicious obstacle to the safeguarding of the ballot as the highest symbol of the democratic society.

This function was originally entrusted to the secretary of the interior, but this arrangement was deemed unsatisfactory because of his partisan identification. A statutory body was thus created to take over this responsibility, but it was also found to be unreliable because of the pressures that could be exerted on it by the political departments that had created and could abolish it.

It was, therefore, converted in 1940 into an independent constitutional commission that was thereafter retained pro forma in the 1973 Constitution and seriously re-established and improved in the Constitution of 1987.

Its record on the whole has been disgraceful rather than commendable. It has miserably failed to achieve the constitutional ideal of "free, orderly, honest, peaceful, and credible elections" for which the present Constitution had strengthened its powers.

Its lack of independence and integrity was first revealed in the case of *Mabangan v. Lopez Vito*, 78 Phil. 1, where the Comelec refused to examine the claimed insufficiency of the votes required for Congress to propose the Parity Amendment.

In fairness, it was sustained by the Supreme Court on the ground that the issue raised was a political question that neither the Comelec nor the Court itself should decide. Fortunately, this evasive doctrine was later reversed in the case of *Tañada v. Cuenco*, 100 Phil. 1101, which held that questions involving the legality, not the wisdom, of a particular act were justiciable.

In 1949, Jose P. Laurel appeared initially to have won the presidential election, only to be defeated by a torrent of votes from Lanao, where it was generally believed "the birds and the bees" had voted for Elpidio Quirino. The Comelec took no steps to investigate the apparent massive irregularity and in effect sustained it.

The elections of Quezon in 1941, Roxas in 1945, Maguiness in 1953, Garcia in 1957 and Macapagal in 1961 were relatively clean. But the victories of Marcos in 1965 and 1969 were marred by tremendous vote-buying that the Comelec took no action to prevent and correct. The declaration of martial law in 1972 further eroded the authority of the Comelec to protect the purity of suffrage that was ravaged with the "ratification" of the 1973 Constitution, the several plebiscites and referendum held to sanitize the Marcos abuses, and the snap election of 1985, which was the straw that broke the camel's back.

It was during the dictatorship that the Comelec sank to its lowest depths. Of special depravity was its decision against Evelio Javier, who appealed it to the Marcos Supreme Court, which deliberately sat on it to protect the respondents. The new Supreme Court unearthed and reversed it in the case of *Evelio Javier v. Commission on Elections and Arturo Pacification*, 144 SCRA 194, which posthumously sustained the assassinated petitioner. How has the Comelec comported itself since then?

Its past abuses and ineptness have caught up with it at last and its reputation, which used to be satisfactory if not exactly commendable, is now in tatters. It is now disdained as among the government agencies least deserving of the people's respect for its unexcusable notoriety.

Its reprehensible conduct in the automated election scandal that was denounced by the Supreme Court itself, its failure to even restrict the proliferation and uglification of prohibited posters in Metro Manila and other urban centers, the *dagdag-bawas* anomalies that have tainted the election of some members of the Senate, the suspicious activities of Luz Tan-cangco and other Comelec officials, its needless acquisition of million-peso vehicles for the ostentation of its members, the believable charges of the fraudulent election of President Gloria with the connivance of Virgilio Garcillano, and many other faults of character and competence demand no other action than its abolition as the supposed but failed protector of the ravished ballot.

The other alternative is for the current chair and members of the Comelec, including all their tainted personnel, to immediately resign and give up all their arrogant privileges so they can be replaced by worthy civic servants who will not reject but instead respect suffrage as the oriflame of the real democracy. But that is hardly probable if they go by the attitude of their idolized exemplar, who insists on remaining where she is no longer fit or wanted. That's the sum and substance of Philippine democracy.

The 'clamor' for Cha-cha is really a whimper

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod



IT'S NO LONGER JUST THE CHARTER change that the traditional politicians are using to get people to dance to their tune. They've introduced the "two-step" as well, in an attempt to get the public onto the dance floor, so to speak. The dance terminology makes it sound innocuous, but make no mistake: we are talking of world-class perfidy here, being perpetrated against the Filipino people.

Item: We are witnessing a government initiative under the guise of a "people's" initiative. Item: We are witnessing the legislative (House of Representatives) and the executive branches of government completely ignoring or going around decisions of the judiciary (Supreme Court). Item: We are witnessing the Commission on Elections—supposed to be an independent constitutional body—doing the bidding of executive and legislative leaders, amid growing fears that the Pangasinan Court might follow in the footsteps of the Fernando Court during the Marcos dictatorship.

Where is the two-step in these perfidious acts? As the older generation may recall, there are several variations of this dance—e.g., the country two-step, the Texas two-step, even the foxtrot. Basically, it is a step-close-step (technically, glissade and chassé) movement, meaning, it actually takes three steps to execute. What the Cha-cha pushers have introduced may be called the Venetian two-step, or the Congressional two-step (VC two-step).

The chassé part (a step and a close) of the VC two-step is where they present the change to a parliamentary form of government as a "mere" amendment, rather than a revision. What is being amended? Article VI (the Legislative Department), Article VII (the Executive Department) and Article XVIII (Transitory Provisions)—seven sections of Article VI, four sections of Article VII and the entire Article XVIII, plus numerous provisions where the word "President" is replaced with "Prime Minister" and Congress or Senate or House with "Parliament."

The glissade (glide) part is the new article

on transitory provisions, where most—though not all—of the perfidious operations take place; it already begins during the chassé part of the VC two-step. The most perfidious of these transitory provisions is Sec. 4 (4) which provides for what is essentially a constituent assembly to take place: "Within forty-five days from ratification of these amendments, the interim Parliament shall convene to propose amendments to, or revisions of, this Constitution consistent with the principles of local autonomy, decentralization, and a strong bureaucracy." (emphasis mine)

In other words, folks, the change to parliamentary system is like a Trojan horse. Once the Filipino people let it in, any and all sorts of changes can take place, courtesy of the interim parliament which is composed of incumbent legislators and executives, who will get another three years of public office without lifting a finger, since there will be no elections in 2007.

How do the Filipino people get screwed? Let us count the ways, all stemming from the claim of Speaker Jose de Venecia et al. that there is a "clamor" for changes in the Charter—a clamor which, simply, does not exist as clearly shown by the latest Pulse Asia survey (March 2006) results.

On the change to a parliamentary form of government, 54 percent of the Filipino people are not in favor, 33 percent are in favor, and 13 percent are undecided. Even if all the undecided vote in favor of change, the nays will still have a statistically significant edge over the yays. This finding is buttressed by the answer to the question on unicameral legislature: 64 percent of Filipinos are against it. Moreover, the R

socio-economic class, which is relatively the most open to a parliamentary system (50 percent not in favor, compared to 56 percent in the ABC and D classes), is at the same time, the most opposed to unicameralism: 67 percent against—which may suggest some confusion on the parliamentary system; but this could also mean—since it is smarter than assumed by the VC two-steppers—that it wants a check and balance system in the legislature.

On the "term limit" issue—whether people realize it or not—this is an integral part of this so-called "people's" initiative, snuck in there somewhere. Do the people favor "unlimited terms" for elected officials? (The officials can run for the same office until kingdom come, should they choose.) Pulse Asia says: 62 percent of the people are against it vs. 38 percent in favor.

On the proposal not to hold elections in 2007, the so-called No-el (the massive carrot to get legislators and local government officials to support the "people's" initiative)—64 percent of the people are against it nationwide.

This isn't all. Remember the "clamor" for a federal system? Survey results show 55 percent against, 32 percent in favor, and 13 percent undecided. Again, even if all the undecided vote for federalism, those against will still be significantly outnumbered the former. Or how about the "clamor" for economic liberalization, at least in the form of allowing foreigners to own residential and industrial lands? Here, that "clamor" is more like a whimper: 79 percent of Filipinos are against, while 21 percent are in favor.

So what's the bottom line? Three conclusions, as far as I can see: (1) "clamor," as used by the VC two-steppers, is about as accurate as "chilling" as used by the anti-Gloria groups; (2) there is no bandwagon effect here—only a steamroller effect; and (3) should this "initiative" prosper through railroading, the people will slap it down in a plebiscite—unless the Comelec continues on its cheating mode.

We must guard our votes.

'Masa: tama na, husto na'

OPPOSITION MEMBERS IN EFFECT ADMITTED that their efforts to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo have failed when senators, led by President Franklin Drilon, came up with one more gimmick to force her resignation. During the President's birthday, Drilon, Senators Aquilino Pimentel, Francis Pangilinan, Sergio Osmeña and others held up, before TV cameras, "resign" stickers which they stuck to their cars, and then pressed for a snap election. I must say they looked every inch more like demonstrating students than Senate leaders. The senators fully realize that for a snap election to happen, the Constitution must first be amended, but that's not important to them. To get into the news is its really time we have a unicameral legislature. The senators have become irrelevant.

Japanese and American investors are among the foreigners who have noted how politics is destroying what are otherwise fantastic prospects for RP investments. But the distaste for the poisoned RP politics is even more prevalent locally. An SWS survey last month showed that many of our people are fed up with the endless and frequently senseless political squabbles and bickerings. Asked whether the opposition should stop all the politicking and help improve the country, 58 percent of those interviewed said yes. Not surprising—because they're the ones who get hurt the most—the *masa* classes of D and E gave the highest affirmative scores to the call for an end to political squabbles—61 percent and 54 percent, respectively, compared to the 50 percent of the combined ABC classes. Fifty-one percent of the respondents also agreed it's time to move on and let GMA focus on the real problems of the nation. On this issue D and E voted 54 percent and 44 percent, respectively.

The survey results clearly have one message for the opposition: *tama na, husto na*, time to move on and improve the lives of the people.

Earlier, I wrote about Filipino diplomat Jose Ma. Cariño's untiring efforts—during his six-year tour of duty in Spain—to track down paintings el-

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



ther done by Filipinos or about the Philippines (even if done by foreigners), as well as personal mementos of our Filipino illustrators like Dr. Jose Rizal and Juan Luna. Many of the paintings and sketches on old Manila found their way into several award-winning books. One of these books is "Islas Filipinas 1663-1888," which features Teyet Pascual's exclusive collection on renowned painters Damian Domingo and Justiniano Asuncion, as well as the collection of the so-called "Malaspina Expedition," culled from the Museo Naval and the Museo de America in Madrid.

I was fascinated by Cariño's story about Admiral Antonio Malaspina, an Italian explorer in the employ of the Spanish Crown. It was the Age of the Enlightenment, and European powers were competing to explore the four corners of the earth. Malaspina was commissioned by the Spanish King in the 1780s to undertake expeditions to Asia, Australia and South America, and to gather information about the animal life and flora in those places. He brought along Italian illustrators; and among the countries they featured was the Philippines. Malaspina won tributes for his expeditions, but he later ended up in jail after he was discredited by the King's officials, and his works were scattered. The botanical drawings, including those about the Philippines, ended up in the Museo Jardin Botánico in Madrid, where Cariño found them.

At the dxRH show Cecile Alvarez and I co-host every Sunday evening at 9 p.m., Jomari Cariño talked about his research and the wealth of military specimen about the Philippines, which he found in the museums, notably the famed Museo Naval in the Spanish capital. Many years ago, I had the chance to do

some articles on the Marcos hidden wealth in Switzerland and took along my two young sons. I recall how we all dumbfounded to see there all the items that pertained to the Philippines, including a vast array of weaponry used in the anti-Moro campaign.

Alvarez, executive director of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, revealed Unesco's efforts to encourage dialogs among nations on the possible return of artifacts seized by military occupations, like the Balangiga bells. Taken from Samar in the earliest years of the American occupation of the Philippines, they are now kept as war booty in Wyoming, USA. But there are many precedents in other countries. Perhaps the most famous are the "Elgin Marbles," which are ancient marble carvings on the frieze of the Parthenon in the Acropolis (Athens), which the occupational British forces carted away. They are now among the star attractions at the famous British Museum in London. When Greek actress Melina Mercouri was cultural minister of her country, she conducted an internationally publicized campaign to recover them for her country, but to no avail.

Acc photojournalist Mandy Navasero, begins her annual summer photo workshop for students, professionals and housewives today. The workshop will run until May 27. Every summer she takes her students on a shooting trip to some exotic place, but this year she outdoes herself. In coordination with Fiesta Tour's Wally Trinidad, Navasero will take photo enthusiasts on a safari to the windswept remote province of Batanes in the northernmost tip of Luzon, where the island of Anuanan is within kissing distance of Taiwan. Our smallest and, perhaps, least populated province, Batanes has preserved the culture of the native Ivatans, who still live in their low-slung limestone houses with thick thatched roofs. Architectural remnants of the Spanish occupation also remain almost untouched. Those interested in the Batanes photo safari may call Navasero at 899-1787 or 896-3208 or Trinidad at Fiesta Tours, 521-7866.

An incident at Greenbelt

IMAGINE YOURSELF BASKING IN A "TYPICAL" weekend spent in a mall. You've had lunch with your family, including your five children, your mother and your sister (your husband is out golfing in Tagaytay), and you're entering Greenbelt 3, a high-end mall where you look forward spending hours just window shopping or buying things you covet. All's well with your world, and you're happy as a clam in your small, secure and safe existence.

Imagine then this world shattered by an incident you never foresaw, planned or expected.

As Angela, the happy wife and mother of our story tells it, she was walking into the mall, trailing her mother and sister and holding two of her children by each hand, when the security guard suddenly appeared in front of her, leaned into her, reached for her handbag slung over her shoulder and touched her left breast. "I screamed and demanded to know why he touched me," she recalls. "And while he immediately apologized, saying 'hindi ko po sinasadya (I didn't mean to do it),' I just froze and found myself unable to move."

Seeing other people about to enter the mall, the guard then signaled Angela to move on, asking her to "please step aside and let other people pass."

"But I refused to move until he explained himself," recalls Angela, and when the guard appeared bent on ignoring her, she demanded to see his superiors.

At this point, hearing Angela scream, her mother and sister rushed to her and demanded to know what happened. When she told them about the mashing, they began to question the guard, who replied that all he wanted to do was to inspect Angela's handbag. "But you let us through without even looking through our bags!" the two women said.

AT THIS point, the women were told to approach "Customer Service," where they were finally able to contact a security OIC by the name of "Rocky." When he came down to meet them, Rocky, without even summoning the guard, asked Angela to simply fill up an "incident report" to put the incident on record, to conform to "SOP."

Feeling uneasy, Angela called up a cousin-in-law who is a lawyer (her husband is also a

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



lawyer, but he wasn't picking up her calls) and told him what happened. He advised her not to sign anything and to instead demand a written statement from the Emirates Security Agency (for which the guard worked) acknowledging that the incident had taken place inside Greenbelt.

Hearing this, Rocky grew sullen and told her that if she continued to refuse to fill up the form, then "magkita na lang tayo sa presinto (let's see each other in the police precinct)." By this time, Angela was well and truly angry, not just because of the incident with the guard, but also because of the way she felt the official of Emirates was trying to intimidate her and dismiss her concerns.

"Tinatakot mo ba ako (Are you trying to frighten me)?" Angela wanted to know. "Anong akala mo sa akin, hindi ako seryoso (Do you think I'm not serious about this)?"

It was at this point that Angela's husband Edgar called her and, hearing what happened, reiterated the warning for Angela not to sign anything and to demand a written statement from the security agency.

"PERHAPS when they realized that my husband was a lawyer, they decided to treat me more seriously," says Angela. Another security officer, a certain Albert who was the operations manager, introduced himself and immediately calmed things down.

"He was really good at PR (public relations)," Angela grudgingly admits, but when he insisted on staying by her side, even as she said her husband would be joining her soon, she had to beg him to stay away "because my children were getting upset."

When Edgar arrived, Albert immediately ap-

proached him and sought to smooth things over, telling him that they did not condone such behavior from any of their guards and promised that the statement they were demanding would be issued.

"They finally gave me that statement," says Edgar in a narrative he prepared. And in it "the guard admitted that he had 'accidentally' touched a 'maselang bahag ng katawan ng complainant' (a sensitive part of the complainant's body)."

"I told them that I wanted the incident blottered," Edgar recounts, "and they brought the guard to the police station (in Makati) for processing." It was here where Angela accused the guard of committing an "act of lasciviousness," but when she and Edgar finally met with a fiscal, she resolved that the charge should be reduced to mere "unjust vexation" allegedly because the police found "no lewd designs" on the part of the guard. The guard is now out on bail.

FOR its part, Emirates Security and Maintenance Systems Inc., through general manager Marinette Van Aglipay (wife of former PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay) sent Angela a letter the following Monday apologizing "for what happened last Saturday" and repeating the guard's contention that "it was unintentional on his part and he is very sorry about it. (Our guards) are just doing their job but sometimes accidents happen."

"It's a letter I would advise my own clients to write," remarks Edgar, stressing that he and Angela are neither placated nor satisfied by the letter.

Angela is more open in her expression of outrage. "You go to Greenbelt, and, of course, you feel safe there. And yet the very people who are supposed to make you feel safe are the ones na binabastos ka pa (who treat you disrespectfully)."

"Am I supposed to be happy and content with a mere apology?" asks Angela. Or as Edgar puts it: "Is the dignity of a woman so dispensable and insignificant that it can be dismissed, despite her protests, by a simple 'Sorry, ma'am, it was an accident, please move on because I've got work to do'?"

Asia's dysfunctional democracies

THE ABRUPT RESIGNATION OF THAILAND'S Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is but another sign of a disturbing paradox: the more "vigorous" Asian democracy becomes, the more dysfunctional it is.

There is no shortage of examples. The attempt by opposition parties last year to impeach South Korea's President Roh Moo-hyun on the flimsiest of excuses; Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's inability to pass legislation through a parliament controlled by the opposition Kuomintang; Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo's stalemated first term and the repeated rumors of looming coup attempts against her: each bears testimony to a form of democratic paralysis in Asia.

If deadlock and confusion were the only results, such political impasses might be tolerable. But chronic stalemate has confronted many Asian democracies with the threat of being discredited, a potential for violence and the prospect of economic decline.

Indeed, the precedents of democratic immobility in Asia are hardly encouraging. For example, since Pakistan's creation in 1947, partisan divisions ensured that no elected government has been able to serve its full term. So Pakistanis grimly learned to accept military rule as their destiny.

The problem in Asia often arises from something the French call "cohabitation," an awkward arrangement by which a directly elected president must co-exist with a parliament controlled by a rival party or parties. The United States and Europe's mature democracies may function well enough with the "checks and balances" of divided government (though the Republicans' bid to impeach President Bill Clinton eight years ago might suggest otherwise), but in Asia the failure to bestow executive and legislative powers on a single institution is usually a terrible drawback.

WORLD VIEW

Satyabrata Rai Chowdhuri



This seems especially true when a government tries to enact radical economic or political reforms. The elected president wants to act, but the assembly refuses to approve the necessary laws. Or vice versa.

The pattern begins in parliamentary deadlock. Incompetent leaders blame legislatures for their failures; legislators blame presidents from rival parties. Finger-pointing replaces responsibility, fueling popular demand for a strongman (or woman) who can override political divisions. Indira Gandhi's brief "emergency rule" in the 1970s was partly the result of such institutional dysfunction.

Divided government also plays into the hands of Asia's separatists. At a critical moment for Sri Lanka's peace process, President Kumaratunga was so incensed by the policies of her political rival, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, that she sacked three of his ministers and called elections almost four years early. The only people who seem to have benefited from this democratic division are the murderous Tamil Tigers.

Similarly, in Nepal, a Maoist insurgency has taken advantage of divisions between the king and parliament to gain control of much of the countryside.

True, Asian democracies, however unstable, are preferable to autocracies, whether military, as in Pakistan and Burma, or communist, as in China

and Vietnam. But the danger in a weakened democracy is not merely blocked legislation and ineffective government. Ambitious but thwarted presidents are easily tempted to take unconstitutional measures; after all, they reason, the people elected them directly.

The same is true of some prime ministers. Indeed, one of the causes of the protests that led to the resignation of Thailand's Thaksin was the accusation that he was weakening his country's democratic traditions in favor of personal rule.

Given these precedents, perhaps Asian policymakers should consider the merits of doing away with "cohabitation" and adopting systems where electoral victory translates into real power. Of course, parliamentary political systems are far from perfect. Neither Singapore nor Malaysia, where ruling parties have long dominated the parliaments, has a political culture as healthy as in Taiwan or South Korea.

But in parliamentary democracies such as Japan and India, an elected leader or coalition loses its legislative majority. This means that governments are judged not by their ability to outmaneuver legislatures, but by the quality of their policies. This seems to be a more efficient—and politically more stable—form of democracy than the unhappy cohabitation that produces such ugly confrontations of the type seen across the region.

For Abraham Lincoln was right: a house divided against itself cannot stand. In many Asian democracies, only institutional reconstruction will prevent collapse.

Project Syndicate

Satyabrata Rai Chowdhuri is emeritus professor at India's University Grants Commission and a former professor of international relations at Oxford University.

Breaking free

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU'RE TRAPPED IN YOUR life? Like you try your hand at so many different things, but in the end you're still your same old self?

I used to have this idea that it's during the summer that we do our growing up. You don't see your classmates for two months and when you go back, you discover that you've changed.

That ended once I stepped into college. I developed a steady routine of spending summer and semestral breaks with my friends, taking up classes and going around shopping malls, getting a tan in sun-kissed beaches and partying. And to my horror, I found myself three years later wearing the same clothes, talking the same way and having the exact same memories as my friends.

YOUNG BLOOD

Buona Raya V. Lacaba

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

One summer was different from the rest, however. For a whole month, I worked around the bar, the kitchen and the dining room of a high-end resort in Palawan to complete 250 hours of practicum training in the food and beverage department in fulfillment of a course requirement. It was my first time away from family, home and everything familiar.

We weren't there as guests. And my five companions and I realized that as soon as the guests got off the boat at the first pier, where there was music and gay people handing out buko juice in pretty bamboo glasses. The boat took us to the second pier, where a security guard was our welcoming committee. He inspected our bags closely. No one helped us as we struggled across the sand lugging our heavy luggage.

Then we were handed our uniforms: three giant white shirts that had yellowed and frayed and had obviously been used by several other people before us and a desolate pair of faded khaki shorts. We were also given rust-stained plates. Feeling like martyrs, we didn't say a word of complaint as we trudged to the dingy employees' cafeteria and swallowed down the first of many unappetizing meals consisting of rice and *nilaga* that tasted suspiciously like a bag of black pepper left to brew in hot water.

That same night, the employees in charge of marine sports, led by this tall, muscular guy caught me alone at the bar and actually tried to pick me up. Since I was going to be stuck with them for a full month on the same island, I gritted my teeth and let them subject me to several rounds of hand shaking.

These same guys continued to harass us by blocking our way in the cafeteria or simply staring at us. Angry pride made me brush off any offers of friendship from anyone among them. I lumped them all together as people who wanted to bully us.

I was wrong. Slowly, the "kuyas" gained my trust and I came to understand that they were, in their own way, trying to be my friend. In two weeks' time, they were staying up with us at night to belt out songs on the videoke although they had to work the 5 a.m. shift the following day. They coordinated their days off to coincide with ours and insisted on spending their meager P196 a day salary by bringing us to all the must-see places in Puerto Princessa. If we so much as mentioned that we liked something—a T-shirt, a bracelet or whatever—it was ours. It was embarrassing, but they did all this with so much quiet sincerity that we couldn't refuse them.

Soon I knew that I had found a place where everything was peaceful and I didn't have to worry about trivial stuff, like if this girl was annoyed with me because she thought I was out to steal her boyfriend or if I had worn the same shirt several times already. I could feel that the people there accepted me and for once in my life, I didn't have to pretend to be anyone other than what I really was.

Two days before we left, a classmate and I sat on the sand, looking out at the mangroves, the water and the wide expanse of sky and the beauty of the surroundings. I recalled everything that happened to me in the past month and it blew my mind completely. I didn't want to leave just yet.

We bawled like babies as the boat took us away from the island for the final time that summer. Even *Are Mhegs*, the shyest of the kitchen staff, walked to the pier to join the other employees as they waved goodbye.

When I got back to Manila, my dad met me at the pier and he immediately noticed that I was not the same person anymore. Later, I went out with my friends and they remarked that I had matured. I knew that it was my summer in Palawan that made the difference.

The primary lesson that I learned there was that people were to be trusted. All of them. I can't go around assuming that all sweaty people wearing sandals are maniacs, as I had been doing here in the big city. These people had families. Some of them had the biggest hearts I have ever had the good fortune of knowing.

Also, I learned to walk in their shoes. I found out what it was like to be so hungry that it felt like someone was tearing at my stomach all the time. I also experienced their indignant rage over the unfairness and wastefulness of being told to throw out the leftover food that we were not allowed to eat.

My Palawan summer was not a vacation but it was an experience that I will always treasure because it helped me grow. It showed me my inner strength because all through that one month, I was determined to make it. And I did not only survive but made the most out of the experience.

If in the past I felt trapped, that summer in Palawan, I broke free.

Buona Raya V. Lacaba, 23, took up BS Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She now works in a bank.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Deficient justice

"One cannot question Fr. (Joaquin) Bernas' integrity and intellectual brilliance which are wanting in the present secretary of justice (Raul Gonzalez)." —Bro. Manuel de Leon, vice chair of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines, on the justice secretary's statement branding Bernas as a "guru of destabilization," after the priest described the "people's initiative" to revise the Constitution as a "desperate" act.

Fallacy of the lesser evil

I UNDERSTAND BONG AUSTERO'S anger. ("Middle-class and angry" by Rina Jimenez-David, PDI, 3/12/06) And I do like that he seems to be genuinely concerned for the country. I'll take any kind of reaction over apathy, even if it goes against mine.

Still, I find Austero's kind of reasoning lamentable.

The guy is a pragmatist. Many sensible people may agree with him, but I can't. Their cry is: Pick the lesser evil, move on, and focus on the work that needs to be done. Forgive, just as we have forgiven before.

Yes, I get it, but I don't buy it. I'd rather protest alongside Randy David and the rest of the "bleeding hearts." Not because I prefer the greater evil. Not because I don't want to move on, or because I don't see the work that lies ahead, or because I can't forgive.

It's simply because there's an evil that must be fought. So we must fight it. After we succeed in this fight and a greater evil

emerges, then we fight on—again. This is the meaning of vigilance, and only vigilance can defeat "sige-na-lang" and "baha-la na." Only vigilance will keep Philippine politics from becoming a bigger joke than it already is. Vigilance will keep our nation from poverty, hunger and corruption.

If we're lucky, then perhaps the right leader will eventually come along. But this kind of luck will never come if we just shrug our shoulders in the face of evil taking hold of our lives; and if we stop believing that the best is yet to come.

And we can move on only if we have a clear idea of where we want to move on to. Even so, we must fight not because we choose to ignore the work done, but because we acknowledge that fighting evil is a fundamental part of the effort to get the work done.

Austero argues that the fight against the present evil is a pathetic cause because of the people who are leading it. A classic case of ad hominem. So he misses the

point of those who, like me, have no ambitions of becoming president, and still choose to fight.

We fight because we deserve better. Lying, stealing and cheating should never be accepted as indispensable political realities. The only decent way we can respond to these irregularities is to make the perpetrators accountable for these acts. If the authorities prevent us from doing this through legal channels, then the only reasonable way left for the people to do is to head for the streets, as we did in Edsa II.

The argument that there is "no better alternative" is quite lame. And the claim (while invoking "Christian forgiveness") that maintaining the status quo is the "higher moral ground" sounds insane.

The question on Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's leadership is something higher than what Austero allows himself to see.

—MICHAEL FRANCIS IAN VEGA II,
vega@phys.ufl.edu

OPINION

LETTERS

Confidentiality in EPCIB-BDO deal meant to quell stock market speculation

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE MARCH 30 column of Conrado Banal III, titled "Scheme milk." The article discussed the Letter of Intent (LOI) that the Social Security System (SSS) signed with Banco de Oro (BDO) on Dec. 30, 2003 for the sale of its 188 million shares in Equitable PCI Bank (EPCIB). Please allow us to clarify some issues he cited.

1. "In effect, the SSS was to sell the shares at P43 each, with the payment coming after seven long years."

The statement is incorrect. Under the terms of the LOI, the SSS would sell the shares at P43.50, which represents a 30 percent premium over EPCIB's last traded price of 33.50 on Dec. 30, 2003.

Initially the SSS would get a cash down payment of P1 billion, with the balance to be paid in a six-and-a-half-year, zero-coupon, non-amortizing note with a combined total face value of about P14 billion. This was subsequently revised in January 2004 to a cash payment of P8 billion.

2. "But here is the ching—the deal was

done in a hurry, during a midnight meeting on a holiday, reportedly called by the SSS chair. If I remember right, the SSS commission was called to a special meeting on Dec. 30, 2003—National Hero's Day—which lasted until midnight." This is pure speculation. Dec. 30 was not a holiday. It was a regular working day because the celebration of National Hero's Day was moved to another date. The Dec. 30 meeting started late in the afternoon and lasted until midnight. The deal was not done in a hurry. The Social Security Commission met a number of times prior to Dec. 30 to discuss various issues with the buyer.

The deal was kept under wraps because confidentiality is part and parcel of transactions of such magnitude and sensitivity. It was meant to quell stock market speculations and insider trading.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System,
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Not in conspiracy with Aragoncillo and Aquino

LOOKS LIKE UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS IN the INQUIRER want to link me to the Leandro Aragoncillo case. Allow me to say it as clearly as possible. I have not corresponded with Aragoncillo directly or indirectly. I don't know the man from Cam.

Michael Ray Aquino has e-mailed me requests to help him with his problems with the Department of Foreign Affairs. All his e-mail to me have been made public and copies have been sent to the INQUIRER through the newspaper's reporters.

Still, the INQUIRER persists in involving me in the alleged criminal activities of either Aragoncillo or Aquino.

I remember months ago when news that Aragoncillo and Aquino were indicted in the United States broke into the media, the US press accounts did not include my name. But an INQUIRER report did. May I know what the INQUIRER is really up to?

Is the INQUIRER accusing me of having broken US law in conspiracy with Aragoncillo or Aquino? If so, what is your basis for saying so?

—SEN. AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL JR.

SC justice said nothing about Batasan 5 case

I AM WRITING TO CORRECT THE NEWS REPORT, ("SC may resolve media suit soon," PDI, 4/3/06) written by Julie S. Alipala of the INQUIRER's Mindanao bureau, which quoted Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez as saying that the Supreme Court would also try to resolve the case filed against the so-called Batasan 5. It was an inaccurate and misleading attribution. Justice Gutierrez did not give any such statement.

In response to a question raised during the turnover of Zamboanga City's Hall of Justice, all that Justice Gutierrez told the INQUIRER reporter was that the Supreme Court might find the opportunity to resolve the cases involving EO 464 and Proclamation No. 1017 when it holds its summer session in Baguio, starting next week.

May we reassure the public that these cases remain matters of high priority and the Court is determined to resolve them at the soonest possible time, with due regard to the requisites of due process.

—ISMAEL G. KHAN JR.,
assistant court administrator and chief,
Supreme Court Information Office,
Supreme Court, Padre Faura, Manila

I am standing by my story. It was based on an interview that I and ABS-CBN reporter Ian Francisco had with Justice Gutierrez inside the office of Judge Eric Elumba. In that interview, although she refused to share her insights lest she preempt some cases that were awaiting action by the Supreme Court, she informed us that the pending cases on the CPR, EO 464 and Batasan 5 were still under discussion. She said that the Court would soon be promulgating its decision, "perhaps, when we have our session in Baguio City starting April 10 to May 5."

—JULIE S. ALIPALA,
correspondent, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Like a lotus

BRAVO! BRAVO! TWO NEWS STORIES IN THE March 19 issue of the INQUIRER—about the Filipino boy who raised funds for the victims of the Saint Bernard landslide in Southern Leyte and the Pinoy hostage who was freed by his captors for an act of kindness in the past—were a great way to end the week.

The INQUIRER just boosted my flagging Filipino pride and reaffirmed the beauty and goodness inherent in the heart of every Filipino. The stories reminded us that we are like the lotus—even from the dirtiest and most oppressive muck, we can spring forth the most beautiful bloom. I'll be looking forward to the INQUIRER's next Sunday issue.

—JULIUS L. DE LA CRUZ,
julsitos@yahoo.com

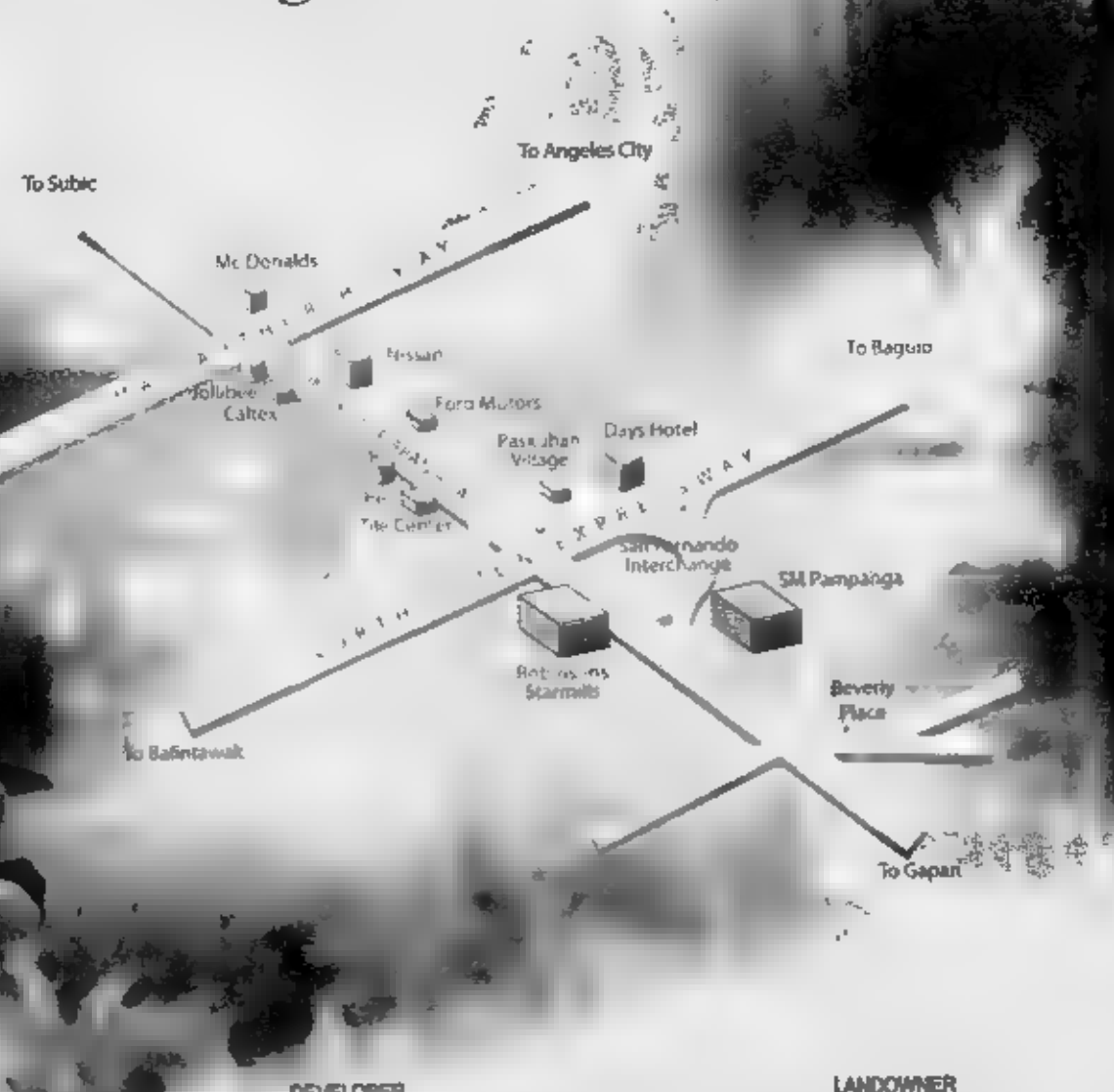
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Cha-cha drive alarms CBCP; issues pastoral letter

From page A1
ercise was being carried out.

Speaking as one for the first time since the signature campaign was launched by the coalition called Sigaw ng Bayan, the prelates urged the faithful not to be "complacent and inactive in the face of this present issue of Charter change, which is so crucial to the future of our country and people."

The bishops sought the "moral justification" of the campaign, and stressed that the revisions and amendments must ensure "shifts toward principled politics, transparency and accountability, electoral and institutional reform, and more efficient delivery of services to the people, especially the poorest."

New SC ...

From page A1
voicing the Mining Act of 1995 and the ill-gotten-wealth cases filed against the Marcoses.

"It can overturn its ruling" in March 1997, wherein it declared Republic Act No. 6735 (the Initiative and Referendum Act of 1989) as inadequate to cover the system of a people's initiative, he said. "But up to now it has not yet been abandoned. Unless they get the majority, it stays."

But Velasco clarified that such a change of stand could happen in any case, not only in the issue of the people's initiative.

Continuing pitch

The President yesterday continued to be the drum-beater for Charter change.

"It is high time now to give a new political structure a chance," she said in a statement issued before the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines issued a pastoral letter expressing alarm over the ongoing signature drive to amend the 1987 Constitution. (See story on Page A1.)

In a news release, Sigaw ng Bayan proclaimed a "moral and democratic" victory after purportedly gathering 8.3 million signatures.

Lawyer Raul Lambino, Sigaw ng Bayan spokesperson, dismissed the opposition's claim that a "snap" election would help resolve the political crisis.

The 8.3 million signatures "clearly show that what Filipinos want is not a change of leadership, but a change in the system of government," Lambino said.

For the third straight day, Ms Arroyo made a pitch for Charter change, stressing that the present political and economic conditions were "already ripe" for constitutional amendments.

She insisted that the country was "taking the right path" in terms of constitutional reforms.

"[T]he necessary constitutional amendment would further give boost to the economic reform measures we have been instituting," she said.

Earlier in the day, the President visited the Batasan Hills to lead a Serbisyo Muna Caravan, which saw her handing out health cards and certificates that would allow the operation of Botika sa Barangay outlets.

Some reporters said they spotted certain people handing out leaflets on Charter change. One reporter said a booth of the Philippine Information Agency there distributed these primers along with a comic book on the Reformed Value-Added Tax.

Asked to comment, Michael Defensor, the President's chief of staff, said he saw nothing wrong in these actions. He said the leaflets would help educate the public on Charter change.

"I would have done it myself," Defensor said in a phone interview.

Don't block it

Mandaue Councilor Carlos Fortuna, an advocate of Charter change, called on its critics not to stop the filing of a petition for a people's initiative.

He said it was only when that had taken place that critics could question the matter before the Supreme Court and resolve the question of whether a people's initiative could be allowed or not.

Fortuna, secretary general of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap), also said the group was hopeful that the Supreme Court would reverse its 1997 ruling on the people's initiative.

The Ulap and Sigaw ng Bayan, a coalition of nongovernment and civic groups, had been gathering signatures to effect a people's initiative for a shift to a unicameral and parliamentary form of government despite the tribunal's ruling.

Parties opposed to the people's initiative had been pointing out that the act was illegal in light of the 1997 Supreme Court decision.

But according to Fortuna, the debate on whether the law allowed for a people's initiative or not could only be resolved once a case had been lodged at the Supreme Court.

"Hopefully, the Supreme Court will change its mind," Fortuna said at the Ambassador Hotel forum. "The people's initiative is a political exercise, not just a purely legal exercise. It can't be restricted by mere legal technicalities."

He also pointed out that the tribunal's decision was "not a majority one or even unanimous."

"Whether the decision will be reversed, it may depend on the current Chief Justice," Fortuna said, referring to Artemio Panganiban, who had written a dissenting opinion on the case. With a report from Lella B. Salaverria

The CBCP issued the pastoral letter a day after the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference met with Sen. Manuel Roxas II at a restaurant in Makati City.

At the meeting, Roxas assured the BBC that 21 senators were ready to block Charter change, according to Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez.

"They (the senators) asked the CBCP to support their stand against Cha-Cha," the bishop told reporters Thursday night.

Major criticisms

The pastoral letter practically summarized all the major criticisms aired against the people's initiative, which President Macapagal-Arroyo had described as a "train that had left the station."

"Signatures are apparently collected without adequate information, discussion and education," the bishops said. "The manner in which these signatures are supposedly collected, including door-to-door campaigns, are not conducive to the kind of informed participation that such fundamental changes demand."

The prelates appeared convinced that the people remained wanting in explanations and discussions on the "complexities and variations" of the proposed parliamentary system.

"What form of parliamentary system, how such a parliamentary system will truly serve the common good and the interest of the nation, especially the poor, have not been articulated," they said, adding:

"Instead, people are given general and sweeping promises of political stability and reform that will automatically come with a new political system."

Pressure to verify

The Commission on Elections in the Eastern Visayas accused local government executives and regional officials of the Department of Interior and Local Government of pressuring them into speeding up the verification of the signatures gathered during the March 25 barangay assemblies.

In separate interviews, Comelec assistant regional director Jose Nick Men-

dro and Leyte elections supervisor Manuel Villegas cited complaints from the field on the matter.

"Our election officers in the field are being pressured by [local] officials and the DILG people to finish the verification process. They had set a deadline for the Comelec to finish the process today (Friday)," Mendros told the Inquirer.

Comelec offices in the region started verifying the signatures last week.

But Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, spokesperson of the Union of the Local Authorities of the Philippines and the Governors' League of the Philippines, denied the charge.

"It is not true. We respect the Comelec as a constitutional body," Evardone said yesterday in a text message.

DILG regional director William Paler had repeatedly denied their office's involvement in the signature campaign.

"Our job was only to monitor the barangay assemblies. That's all," he said.

No instructions

An elections supervisor in a Leyte town claimed that the mayor had asked their office to finish the process quickly.

"But I cannot simply do that. There were no explicit instructions from our central office to speed up the verification. I really do not know why this thing is being fast-tracked," said the officer who asked not to be named.

Villegas said that in the absence of instructions, Comelec field officers should not give in to pressure exerted on them.

"I told them to do their job insofar as verifying the signatures [is concerned]. Our [central] office did not set any deadline for us to finish the process," he told the Inquirer.

Villegas said they were even at a loss as to what they would do with the signatures after these had been verified.

He said he had written the Comelec central office for guidelines but that there had been no response.

In the meantime, Villegas said, Comelec personnel in the region had been instructed

to maintain "outmost impartiality and independence in the verification of these signatures and all submitted documents [concerning] this signature campaign."

Earlier, Presidential Assistant for Eastern Visayas Victor Domingo said they had gathered signatures from over 20 percent of the region's over 1 million voters and had met the required 3 percent from each of the 12 districts.

No popular support

In General Santos City, the signature campaign has failed to gain popular support.

For example, of the more than 20,000 registered voters in Barangay Apopong, only about 600 signed the petition.

A similar situation was observed in Barangay Batomelong, where only 29 of the more than 8,000 registered voters signed.

Delia Rabanes, chair of the Association of Barangay Captains, said village officials did not help distribute the forms because they were against Charter change and did not want to be associated with the signature drive.

Rabanes said Malacañang and the DILG were "not telling the truth."

"The DILG was the one who directed us to conduct a house-to-house signature campaign," she said.

Diverting attention

In Davao City, Councilor Bonifacio Militar said Charter change was the administration's attempt to divert public attention from the yet unresolved controversy surrounding Ms Arroyo's presidency.

"The President is so brilliant in diverting the attention of the people. The issue of whether to change the Constitution is her way of trying to get off the hook. I bet she is laughing at all of us now. Maybe she's enjoying the thought that she has fooled us. Perhaps she has been rolling on the floor thinking how stupid we all are," he said.

Militar said Charter change would not benefit the public.

"Changing the form of government is the wrong prescription. It will never give us the chance to escape what we have and what we are today. I still believe that change should come from changing our values as a people, changing our attitude toward others and toward ourselves," he said.

Councilor Angela Labrado-Trinidad said Charter change would not solve the economic and political crisis.

"The bigger problem is not the form of government but the existing class composition of the government," Trinidad said.

Exercise in futility

Lawyer Abraham Johnny Asuncion, elections supervisor in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, said the signature campaign was doomed to fail because irregularities in the gathering process had been discovered.

"It's an exercise in futility. It's millions of [pesos] and lots of effort and time wasted," he said.

Asuncion made the statement on Thursday after receiving the initial batch of signatures that were verified by Comelec officers in various Nueva Vizcaya towns.

Among the flaws that were easily noted, he said, were that the signatures appeared to have been faked or that several names were signed by only one person.

In some villages, the number of people who signed the forms reportedly exceeded the number of registered voters.

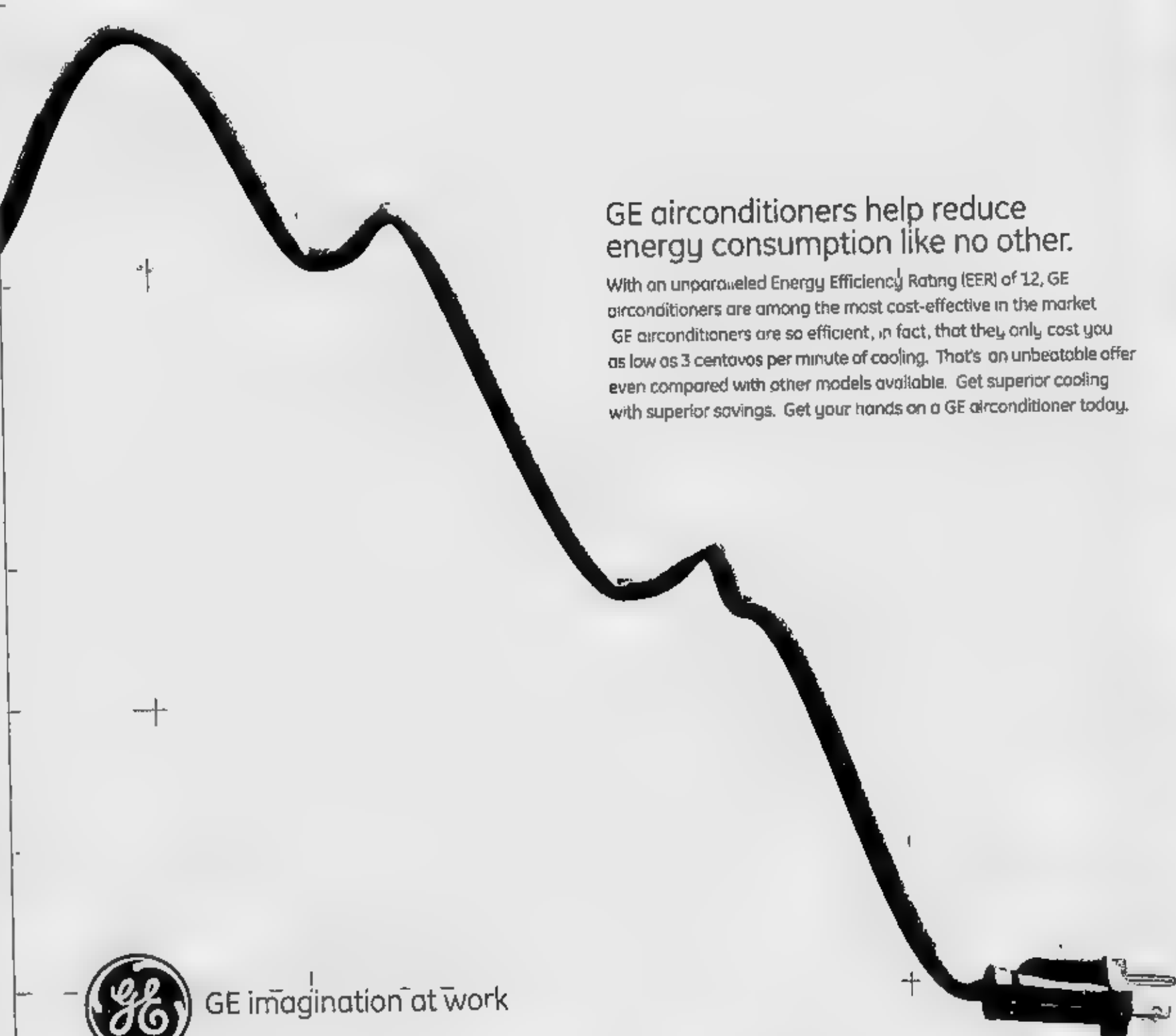
Under mango tree

"[The election officers] were laughing because the defects were glaring. Many of the signatures were totally different [from those in Comelec records]. Even illiterate and dead voters managed to sign," Asuncion said.

"As our personnel put it, these [forms] were signed under the mango tree," he said.


With reports from Aquiles Z. Zonito and Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

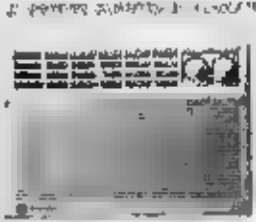
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TWO YEARS AWAY FROM RETIREMENT, P/Inspector Pedro Velasco is proud of what he did on the job as well as what he didn't do, like refusing to receive a bribe of P300,000. (APRIL 8, 2006)

Cop could not send 3 sons to college but rejects P300,000 bribe

From page A1

Perhaps more importantly, Velasco's rejection of the gutter of money has bolstered the admiration for him that his wife Judith and their four children hold.

Pride in the police force is the one thing Velasco hopes to bequeath as legacy to his fellow policemen and to his children when he retires in 2008, according to the 54-year old officer.

The soft-spoken officer had always wanted to be a policeman.

He said his inspiration came from the cops in his town in Bantay, Ilocos Sur, during the 1960s when policemen were still "being doozed."

"They looked good in their uniform," he said.

The son of a farmer and the second youngest among eight children, Velasco went to Manila in 1972 and studied criminology while working as a civilian employee of the Armed Forces in Camp Aguinaldo.

In 1974, he joined the Army as an enlisted man. A dozen years later, Velasco shifted to the Philippine Constabulary. When the PC and the Integrated National Police merged to become the Philippine National Police in 1991, he became a police officer.

Heart 'jumping with joy'

During his 32 years in the service, the former anti-narcotics officer was offered bribe money worth hundreds of thousands of pesos at least three times.

Each time, he said, he turned the offer down. The first time he did, it felt very good.

"My heart was jumping with joy," he said in an interview in his office this week. "Before you become a cop, you take an oath that you would serve the nation. Accepting bribe money is not included in that oath."

But being straight has its price.

With his meager salary, Velasco could not even afford to send his first three sons to college. A pay slip he took out from his pocket showed what his take-home pay is—about P10,000 monthly.

The rest of his P28,000 gross salary goes to loans, which he would make every time "food on the table was not enough."

The Velascos live in a housing project in Metro Manila. They plod on by keeping a tight hold on the little money they have.

Prayers to the Virgin

The family, for one, rarely goes to an outing.

Knowing he could not send his sons to school, Velasco did the next best thing. When they reached 18, he taught them how to drive and, with their help, the family succeeded in sending the youngest child, a girl, to school.

The daughter, Judith, has finished accountancy and is now working for a bank—a career for the girl which Velasco said he had beseeched the Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan.

Velasco headed the 3-man team that arrested Lee as the importer with alleged ties

to Malacañang stepped out of his plane at the airport that Sunday in March. Within an hour, Lee was in detention at the office of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Camp Crame.

Another police team had been tracking Lee's activities for months. The police had also infiltrated at least one of his companies.

Days before Lee's arrest, the police intercepted three container vans full of allegedly smuggled plastic resin on their way to Valenzuela City. The police said it was Lee who worked out their release.

Velasco said the P300,000 bribe offer was made just hours after Lee's arrest.

The officer said he and another policeman, a certain SPO1 Sia, were talking in his office when Lee, who was being held in another room, came in and asked to talk to him. The importer's relatives and counsel had arrived earlier.

He said Lee fished out something out from his pocket, and said, "Sir, it's money, P300,000."

'Insulted'

In exchange, Lee asked for a "small favor." He hoped the police would drop the charges against him.

But the man had miscalculated Velasco and Sia. What Lee got from the officers, instead, was a strong rebuke.

"I told him, 'Samuel Lee, ever since I joined the force, I never dreamed of accepting bribe money.' I told him right there and then that I was arresting him on [separate] charges of bribery," Velasco said, adding he was "insulted" by the offer.

They then took Lee to Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, the officer in charge of the police campaign to weed out smugglers at the Bureau of Customs. De los Santos instructed them to prepare bribery charges.

Uproar at CIDG

A prosecutor later recommended Lee's release pending "further investigation," a decision that caused uproar among CIDG officers.

"How could the money come from me with my salary?" a bewildered Velasco, explaining the wads of P1,000 bills, reacted on learning of the prosecutor's recommendation.

After the CIDG protested, the prosecutor "corrected" her action by charging Lee with corruption of a public official.

For an organization perennially linked to corruption and some of whose members regularly top the list of human rights violators, Velasco's actions have lifted the spirits of other officers dreaming of a graft-free police force.

"That is what I want my children to be proud of—that ever since I joined the military and then the police, my work has been clean. Wherever they go, they can be proud of me."

He now eagerly looks forward to the day of his retirement: He plans to use the lump sum he'll get for his sons' weddings.



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INQUIRER *Visayas*

Pilgrimage traditions in Guimaras

By Jo Martinez-Clemente
Jordan, Guimaras

EVEN THOSE FROM FAR-away Finland have come to Guimaras Island on a Holy Week.

Last year, Timo Sahja and Sonja Malinen, psychiatric nurses from the Scandinavian country, set out to explore Southeast Asia and made sure that they watched the passion play, "Ang Pagtatal," as well as do the Stations of the Cross on the Balaan Bukid, in Jordan, the capital town of Guimaras.

They say they learned about the events from the website of the "Lonely Planet."

Balaan Bukid is Ilonggo for "Holy Mountain," while "Pagtatal," another Ilonggo word, means "to remove." In the context of the Lenten play, the terms mean "removing the body of Christ from the Cross."

This season, "Ang Pagtatal" runs its 31st year, while Balaan Bukid marks 51 years as a pilgrim site.

Do miracles happen in Balaan Bukid?

Jordan parish priest Jose Manuel Escanlar says the Roman Catholic Church has yet to receive any document or information of miracle claims for investigation or study. Even so, Escanlar says "the silent conversion of a people enlightened by their pilgrimages to the shrine who are now enjoying the fruits of their conversion is the modern-day miracle."

"And I pray that there will be more miracles of this kind," he says.

Mang Quiling

"Ang Pagtatal," a community endeavor that tells the story of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, made its debut in 1979. The stage play was conceptualized, written and directed by Aquilino Secuzana, locally known as Mang Quiling.

Secuzana says the maiden presentation was a mime—no dialogues, just simple acting. "It was a success and the people liked it so that the following year, we improved on it and started to put in the dialogues and the costumes."

Through the years, play performance evolved. Technology and the influx of foreign visitors prompted the organizers to pre-tape dialogues in the vernacular but with English translations flashed on a wide screen.

The cast includes ordinary residents—tricycle drivers, policemen, housewives and farmers. In contrast, the audience has top honchos of the government and private corporations, and diplomats.

What sets "Ang Pagtatal" apart from other passion plays presented across the country?

In Jordan, a pilgrim or plain tourist is moved back in time. For one, the actors wear Roman costumes that match the island's ambience.

From the amphitheater, where the play is staged, the actors and the spectators move to the streets, following Christ as he carries his cross to a hill. The Roman guards who line the streets are led by a soldier on horseback.

Mt. Golgotha is a mound now fenced and maintained by the municipal government for the yearly event. And when Christ is put on the cross between two thieves in that mound, the scene is picture perfect.

Despite the hordes of people that follow the play to the hill, silence reigns. The people solemnly watch, pray and remember that Good Friday when Jesus died.

Balaan Bukid

On Thursday afternoon or earlier, pilgrims and islanders follow the Stations of the Cross through Balaan Bukid.

There are two routes to the place. One is the original path taken by Mill Hill priest, Rev. Fr. Bergil Pixner, OSB, and Crisogono Domingo when they first searched the area 51 years ago to look for a site to shelter a statue of Mary and the Child Jesus.

From a boat in the Bongolan Bay, the pilgrims trek up the mountains, passing by the Stations of the Cross and their life-size statues. The original installations were made by patients of a leprosy sanatorium in Sta. Barbara, Iloilo where Pixner served as chaplain. They were later replaced by another set coming from Spain.

The other way is a one-hour trek from the heart of Barangay Balcon Melliza. Climbing is less tedious as the mountain slopes are not as steep. The Stations of the Cross are simple, laminated color pictures mounted on huge trees or stone walls.

There are concrete pews to kneel on. Some portions of the route are lined with *calachuchi* trees, which are abloom with fragrant white flowers this time of the year.

On top of the Balaan Bukid is the Ave Maria Shrine.

According to one account, the Holy Week tradition arose from a "panaad" or promise made by Domingo when he and his wife Candelaria, together with some leprosy patients, fled from Japanese forces to Panay during World War II.

The Japanese learned about their escape and started shooting the lepers. It was then that Crisogono made the promise to Mary to give her a gift if they survived.

After the war, Domingo sought out Pixner to help him fulfill his promise. The priest suggested that since he had a natural flair for the arts, he should carve a statue of Mary with a Child.

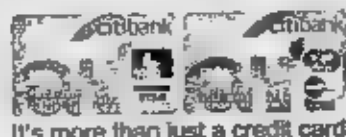
Crisogono first made a small statue model, which, according to the story, was brought to the Mill Hill House at Slingerlands in Albany, New York by Pixner. The bigger statue was later produced and blessed by the Spanish Cardinal Quiroga, who was then visiting the Diocese of Jaro.

Then Jaro Archbishop Jose Ma. Cuenco issued a decree declaring May 1 as "Pilgrimage Day" to Balaan Bukid. In time though, the site has become a pilgrimage destination during Holy Week.

When Guimaras became a separate province, the care of the shrine was entrusted to the Jordan parish.



FROM the amphitheater to the streets, Jesus carries his cross followed by the crowd who now becomes part of the cast. JO CLEMENTE



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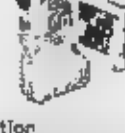
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BUGARIN

Court orders seizure of assets of ex-NBI chief

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN THIRD DIVISION ORDERED on Thursday the seizure of eight real estate properties owned by the late former National Bureau of Investigation director Jolly Bugarin.

Ordered seized were nine residential lots in Tagaytay City; two house and lots in Greenhills, San Juan; a residential lot in Capitol District, Quezon City; two residential lots in Valle Verde, Pasig City; Orchard and Cocoland Streets in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro; and a residential lot in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro.

The antigraft court issued a writ of execution based on a 2002 Supreme Court ruling that declared Bugarin's assets as ill-gotten.

Also ordered forfeited in favor of the government were Bugarin's shares in the Makati Sports Club and the Manila Polo Club, which he acquired in 1975 and 1978.

The Sandiganbayan directed its sheriff, Edgardo Urieta, to effect the forfeiture of the properties and coordinate with the Register of Deeds to transfer immediately their titles in favor of the government.

In a separate resolution, the court noted that several of the subject properties were already in the names of Bugarin's relatives after his death but said the right of the State to recover ill-gotten wealth would be given primacy because it is "a higher right."

The government almost lost the case in 1991 after the Sandiganbayan dismissed the lawsuit against Bugarin after the latter presented several documents proving his sources of income to support his claim over the questioned properties.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government elevated the case to the Supreme Court, which overturned the Sandiganbayan decision, voting 8-2 with five abstentions.

The SC noted that among the sources of income submitted by Bugarin were rentals from his houses in Makati, Pasig and San Juan but these were for the years 1981 to 1986.

The forfeited properties were acquired between 1968 and 1980 hence, the High Court pointed out, the house rentals could not have been part of the funds used in their purchase.

In fact, it said that Bugarin's disposable income between 1968 and 1980 only amounted to P766,548 but he acquired real estate properties and made investments worth P2,170,163.

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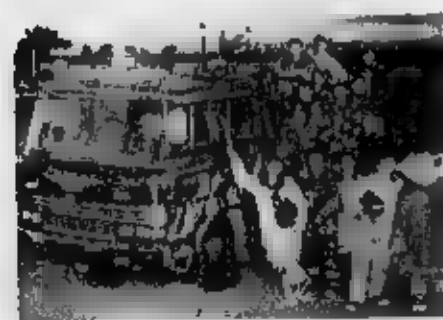
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WHAT'S INSIDE



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■ **Barangay official shot dead in Malabon** /A22



■ **Fire volunteers tell their stories in interactive exhibit** /A23

Graft charges filed vs QC congresswoman

Public funds used for helpers' wages, says complainant

By Nelson F. Flores and Michael L. Ubac

A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF QUEZON City Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza yesterday accused her of graft, malversation of public funds and falsification of public documents in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Richell Vineles, in a seven-page com-

plaint-affidavit, claimed that Daza, "with full knowledge and consent," had been using public funds to pay the salaries of her house help and other employees working in her pizza parlor.

Also included in the charge sheet were Melencio Castelo Jr., Daza's brother and chief of staff; Evangeline Abigonda, Daza's personal secretary and trusted aide; some officials of the

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), several John Does and 18 other individuals who allegedly work for Daza in a private capacity.

The 18 were identified as Rey Tagu-dando, Danilo dela Torre, Norwina Sanchez, Michael Bilaya, Maxie Fernandez, Danilo Martinez, Olive Gabriel, Sancho Baluyot, Josie Gonzales, Daisy Laberosa, Angelina Peciller, Catalina

Guillermo, Ruben Aban, Godofredo Talud, Mary Ann Saco, Ramirez dela Cruz, Francis Pallen and Ligaya Sales. According to Vineles, some of them work in Daza's pizza parlor.

Daza denied the charges and told the INQUIRER that her lawyer was already preparing her defense. "Of course, I deny the charges," she said.

GRAFT/A23



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Thailand crisis far from over

BANGKOK—THAI PRIME MINISTER Thaksin Shinawatra's decision to step aside after a snap election left him unable to form a new government has let some steam out of a seven-month political crisis, but the drama is far from over.

The main opposition parties are boycotting by-elections on April 23 meant to complete last weekend's snap poll called by Thaksin to rout critics who accused him of corruption and abuse of power. They want political reforms first.

Most of the 39 seats, all but one in the southern opposition stronghold, could remain unified.

Only a full parliament can elect a new prime minister to replace Thaksin, but parliament must convene within 30 days of the April 2 poll.

Meanwhile, Thaksin says he will take "a rest" but retain leadership of his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party, a move his enemies say will allow him to pull strings from behind the scenes.

Months of hard negotiations lie ahead and the outcome is uncertain.

Following are some possible scenarios:

Rolling by-elections: The Election Commission says reruns in 39 constituencies are open to the three parties that boycotted the April 2 general election. The opposition wants meaningful political reforms first.

If the by-elections are inconclusive, the EC could ask the Constitutional Court to allow parliament to meet while more polls are held, analysts say.

But that could trigger protests against the court which has handed Thaksin two favorable rulings in the past.

"Whether the Constitutional Court, the involuntary power broker in the present political situation, would play along with the TRT remains to be seen," said Kim Eng Secunbes.

Protests resume: Street protesters outside Government House have packed up. But they left behind yet another ultimatum for

Thaksin—leave politics completely, or the protests resume on April 30.

"Thaksin will no longer be the prime minister, but he is still the leader of the party and will bring in his nominee to implement his policies, which we won't accept," media mogul and rally leader Sondhi Limthongkul said.

But April is the hottest month of the year and opinion polls show most Bangkok residents growing weary of the protests and the disruptions they cause.

Constitutional reform: Critics say the 1997 "People's" Constitution needs a rewrite to close loopholes used by Thaksin to undermine checks and balances and subvert the independence of watchdog agencies.

That process will take six months to a year and involve a "neutral" committee of former charter drafters, judges and legal experts, says Bhokun Bhauakua, the former speaker of parliament and lawyer who is likely to oversee the process.

The opposition has not spelled

out what reforms it wants, but analysts say it may seek to curb the powers of the prime minister.

A rule requiring election candidates to belong to a party for 90 days—designed to prevent the political bed-hopping that fostered snaky coalitions—may also come under scrutiny by unhappy factions within Thaksin's party.

"There will be a nasty war during the political reform process as a lot of politicians want to change this 90-day rule," the Nation newspaper said.

Royal intervention: June 9 is a date that looms large in Thailand.

Thaksin cited King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 60th anniversary on the throne as the main reason for stepping aside ahead of celebrations to be attended by royalty from around the world.

"I ask every party, whether you love or hate me, to please think of the core of the country. The king," Thaksin said in urging Thais to reunite.



A THAI sells noodles in Chiang Mai province, April 6. While much of urban Thailand celebrated the political demise of Thaksin, voters in his northern home province have voiced regret and hail his achievements. **AFP**

Two Koreas agree to hold new talks

SEOUL—NORTH AND SOUTH Korea have agreed to resume bilateral talks later this month as diplomatic efforts to revive stalled six-party negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear program gain momentum.

Almost a month after pulling out of the negotiations over US-South Korean military drills, North Korea proposed resuming inter-Korean high-level talks in Pyongyang on April 21-24, the unification ministry here said Friday.

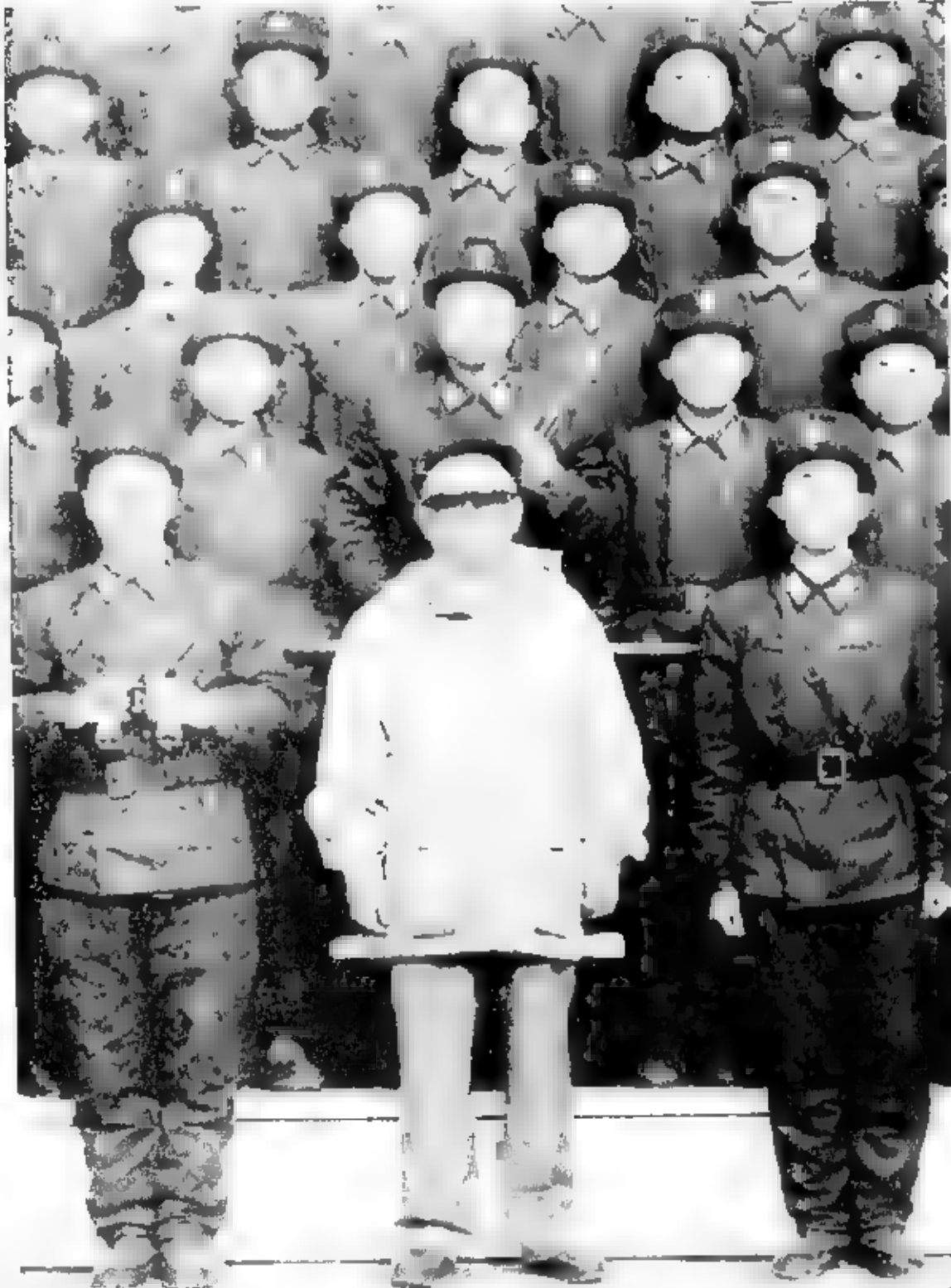
"We received a message from Pyongyang Thursday, which suggested the high-level talks should be resumed," a ministry spokesperson told AFP. "We replied that we agreed."

Pyongyang on March 11 called off the inter-Korean talks originally set for last week in protest at US-South Korean war games, which it described as "a test nuclear war" against the communist state.

The talks between Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok and his North Korean counterpart Kwon Ho-ung, chief counselor of the North's Cabinet, are among the highest level meetings held between the neighbors.

The talks are designed to focus on economic cooperation and reconciliation, but Seoul is expected to use the meeting to urge Pyongyang to return to six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

Discussions on the North's nuclear intentions have been in limbo since November and Pyongyang has made it clear that it will not return to the table unless Washington lifts financial sanctions imposed on the Stalinist regime for allegedly counterfeiting US dollars and laundering money. **AFP**



NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong-il, center, poses for a photograph with the soldiers of Korean People's Army 821 unit, which is situated on the undisclosed forefront, North Korea, in this early April, 2006 photo. **AP**

9/11 horror relived at Moussaoui trial

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA—FORMER New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani told jurors in the Sept. 11 Zacarias Moussaoui death penalty trial Thursday he is still haunted by memories of severed body parts and people leaping from the World Trade Center inferno.

Testifying at the trial of convicted al-Qaida plotter Moussaoui, Giuliani painted a harrowing picture of carnage and chaos as Manhattan streets were swallowed by a "nuclear cloud" of debris.

"It was the worst experience of my life. I hope it was the worst experience I will ever have or the country will ever have," Giuliani said after taking the witness stand for the prosecution.

"Every day I think about it. Every day some part of it comes back to me. I can see a person jumping, see the body parts or see a little boy or girl at a funeral," the former mayor said.

It was a view of Sept. 11, 2001 that many Americans have yet to see, as the graphic pictures of suicide leaps and dismembered bodies were mostly not shown on US television to avoid upsetting viewers.

Prosecutors called Giuliani as a witness after telling jurors that the "voices of the victims" of the attacks on New York and Washington would convince them to sentence Moussaoui to death.

They played video clips of people jumping to their deaths from the World Trade Center and closeup images of the hijacked airliners smashing into the twin towers, drawing gasps from the hushed courtroom.

Jurors also heard the voice of Sept. 11 hijacker Mohammad Atta, who mistakenly keyed the air traffic control microphone instead of the cabin intercom minutes before flying into the World Trade Center.

"We have some planes," the accented voice of Atta could be heard saying, filling the courtroom. "We have some planes. Stay quiet and you will be okay. We are returning to the airport."

Jurors watched Giuliani intently. Moussaoui, 37, who was wearing a green prison jumpsuit and a white knit skullcap, seemed to pray under his breath as footage was shown of the twin towers crashing down.

"You will hear the voices of the victims of Sept. 11," assistant US attorney Robert Spencer told the jury as the second phase of the sentencing trial of the Moroccan-born Frenchman got under way.

"You will hear the voices of the victims' families," he said. "Those voices, that evidence, will be all you need in this case to sentence the defendant."

"Al-Qaida turned those buildings into slaughterhouses," Defense lawyer Gerard Zerkin urged the jury to reject the death penalty, saying the defense would prove Moussaoui had schizophrenia, was the victim of a difficult upbringing and had been indoctrinated by al-Qaida.

He urged jurors "not to be fooled" by Moussaoui's apparent normal behavior in court and said several specialists would testify he is mentally ill. **AFP**

Suicide bombers kill 40 at Baghdad mosque

BAGHDAD—TWO SUICIDE ATTACKERS wearing women's cloaks detonated explosives Friday in a Shiite mosque in northern Iraq, killing at least 40 people and wounding scores of others, police said. It was the second major attack against Shiite targets in as many days.

Police Lt. Col. Falah al-Mohammedawi said the attacks occurred at the Buratha mosque, which is affiliated with the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the main Shiite party.

First reports said the explosions were caused by mortar fire, but al-Mohammedawi said police were now sure that they were caused by suicide attackers.

The attack occurred as worshippers were leaving at the end of Friday prayers, the main weekly religious service. Earlier Friday, the Interior Interior cautioned people in Baghdad to avoid crowds near mosques and markets due to a car bomb threat.

A prominent Shiite politician, Jalal Eddin al-Sagheer, was among the worshippers but police said he was unhurt.

Frantic rescuers carried the bodies from the mosque compound on makeshift wooden wheelbarrows and loaded them on the back of pickup trucks. The Baghdad city council urged Iraqis to donate blood for those wounded.

On Thursday, a car bomb exploded about 300 meters from the Imam Ali mosque in Najaf, the most sacred shrine in Iraq for Shiite Muslims. Ten people were killed, police said. **AP**

Asia medical tourism seen earning billions

SINGAPORE—ASIA'S MEDICAL TOURISM industry is expected to generate over \$4.4 billion a year by 2012, with India, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea the top destinations, a leading travel firm said Friday.

Low-cost, high-quality healthcare in Asia is already attracting more than 1.6 million tourists each year, mostly from within the region, according to a report issued by Singapore-based air ticketing firm Abacus International.

"Asia is a preferred healthcare

destination and is set to grow further, fueled by the relatively low-priced healthcare services available," Abacus president Don Birch said.

According to the report, medical tourism—which refers to trips combining treatment and check-ups with leisure—is growing by 20 to 30 percent each year with the industry now worth around half a billion dollars a year in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and India.

"Asia is an idea, growth environment ... with competitively-priced

quality healthcare service in major tourist cities," Birch said.

Thailand welcomes more than one million medical tourists each year because of the variety of procedures available, Abacus said.

Bumrungrad International Hospital for example offers a full spectrum of surgical services performed by certified doctors all under one roof.

Singapore, on the other hand, is known for delivering cutting edge medical treatment and attracts medical tourists with its

competitively priced services.

For example, hip-replacement surgery costs two-thirds less in Singapore than in the United States, the report said.

The city-state attracts 370,000 medical tourists each year and is targeting one million medical visitors and \$1.6 billion in revenue by 2012.

India, whose medical tourism business is growing at 30 percent per year, currently draws about 150,000 visitors each year. It is forecast to generate at least \$2.2 billion by 2012. **AFP**

After 50 years' trying, Harley-Davidson roars into China



HOLLIS Zhao, manager of Harley-Davidson's first authorized dealership in China, tends to one of the bikes at the showroom in Beijing April 7. **AP**

By Cindy Sui

BEIJING—SHINY, SLEEK MACHINES line the showroom of Harley-Davidson's first authorized dealership in China, silently beckoning freedom-loving, individualistic Chinese with the slogan: "Let's Ride!"

The official launch of the dealership, the first the US manufacturer has appointed in China, on Saturday marks the end as well as the beginning of a long journey for the Milwaukee-based company and Chinese Harley fans.

The new store, called "Beijing Harley-Davidson," began doing business in the Chinese capital this week and will sell and service the

low-riding bikes as well as parts, accessories, clothing and collectibles.

It has taken Harley more than 50 years to enter communist-ruled China, due to barriers including government restrictions on powerful bikes and simply the lack of demand for one of the United States' most iconic symbols.

But with a fast-expanding wealthy class and cravings for luxury goods growing, Harleys would undoubtedly appeal to Chinese people, said Hollis Zhao, general manager of the shop owned by Beijing businessman Wan Jidong.

"People equate Harleys with freedom. That's why Chinese people like them," Zhao told AFP

from the store that is located next to an upscale housing estate along Beijing's Fourth Ring Road.

For the same reason some lawyers and doctors in the US shed their suits and ties on weekends and mount their Harleys, an increasing number of Chinese people want to express their alter ego through Harleys, Zhao said.

"They might look urbane, but Chinese people also have a wild side," said Zhao, a longtime motorcycle rider, who has journeyed from Beijing to Tibet on a two-wheeler.

"Those who own Harleys in China use it to show their personality. Others treat it as a symbol of success."

While a vast majority of the 80

million motorcycles owned in China are domestic brands—and most are used in the countryside by farmers—a growing number of people want to ride imported heavyweight bikes for fun.

Many major cities in China have riders' clubs that organizes tours.

About 1,000 Harleys are already in China, but they were smuggled in because of the lack of a dealership until this month.

Their owners and others who want to buy the bikes are in the upper class, including those who made a fortune from real estate or IT sectors, people who have lived abroad and "princelings"—sons of high ranking officials. **AFP**

US Senate immigration overhaul in doubt

Republicans object, say measure will give amnesty to law-breakers

WASHINGTON—A US SENATE compromise on an overhaul of immigration law appeared to get bogged down late on Thursday in the face of opposition by some Republicans who say it would give amnesty to lawbreakers.

It appeared unlikely the Senate would approve before a two-week congressional break on Friday the radical immigration reform that would give millions of illegal immigrants a chance to earn US citizenship.

The bill's backers expressed fear that failure to enact the legislation before lawmakers leave for their spring break could hurt its chances in a congressional election year.

Senate Republican Leader Bill Frist of Tennessee and Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada earlier hailed a "breakthrough" on the compromise bill that would include a guest worker program sought by President George W. Bush. But the two leaders were unable

to agree on how many amendments to the bill would be allowed.

Frist later accused Democrats of trying to block the bill by refusing to allow amendments. Democrats said they wanted to protect the bill from being "gutted" by Republicans opposed to the bill.

"Republicans are still deeply divided on this issue, and we must protect this from those senators bent on gutting the bill with hostile amendments," said Reid. The congressional debate over

how to deal with an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants has sparked large protests in many US cities against a crackdown and more demonstrations are planned in 10 cities on Monday.

The Senate is considering a compromise that would allow illegal immigrants who have been in the United States more than five years, about seven to eight million people, a chance to become citizens if they pay a fine, pay their taxes, and meet other require-

ments such as learning English.

Bush said earlier he was encouraged by the compromise and urged quick passage of the legislation.

The Mexican government in a statement called the agreement "an important step toward establishing new mechanisms that permit legal, safe and ordered migration which respects human rights."

Any Senate bill still has to be merged with a House of Representatives version that focuses on border security and enforcement

and makes it a felony, instead of a civil offense, to be in the country illegally. It also calls for constructing a fence along parts of the US border with Mexico.

A number of conservative House Republicans also oppose Senate provisions that would give illegal immigrants a chance at legal status and citizenship.

"I do not believe a plan of this nature can pass the House," said Rep. Thomas Tancred, a Colorado Republican. **Reuters**

Scottish swan has deadly bird flu virus; 3rd infected Egyptian dies



A SWAN flaps its wings in St. James Park in London, April 6. Tests have confirmed that a wild swan found dead in Scotland had the lethal H5N1 strain of bird flu—Britain's first case of the disease. **REUTERS**

LONDON—BRITAIN CONFIRMED Thursday its first case of H5N1 bird flu, while Egypt recorded its third human fatality as the country struggled to enforce preventive measures to contain the disease.

In Berlin, the German government said some 14,000 more fowl will be slaughtered in a small town near Leipzig where H5N1 bird flu has killed turkeys in the first outbreak on a farm in Germany.

More than 16,400 turkeys, chicken and geese have already been slaughtered since the virus was confirmed Wednesday in the farm in Wernsdorf.

In Britain, the Scottish Executive in Edinburgh said the mute swan—found last week on a harbor slipway in Cellardyke, Fife—perished from the same H5N1 strain that has killed more than 100 people, mainly in Asia.

The confirmation brought to 13 the number of countries in the European Union reporting cases of the feared disease.

Egypt reported its third human death on Thursday—one of two new cases reported, bringing to 11 the total number of confirmed transmissions to humans in the country.

Iman Mohammed Abdel Gawad, a 16-year-old girl from the northern governorate of Menufiya, died after being rushed to hospital Wednesday suffering from high fever and

shortness of breath, the official MENA news agency reported.

According to the latest figures released by the World Health Organization, the H5N1 strain has killed at least 108 people worldwide but experts say many cases go unreported.

The bulk of human cases have been reported in Southeast Asia and China, where the epidemic broke out in 2003, but Egypt, Turkey and Azerbaijan have been the most affected countries in the new wave of infections that spread westward this year.

A deadly strain of bird flu has been detected in Africa's most populous city, the Nigerian commercial capital Lagos, Information Minister Frank Nweke said.

"The virus has so far been identified in 12 states, including Lagos, as well as around the federal capital Abuja," Nweke told AFP.

In the three months since the west African country has begun battling avian influenza, more than 450,000 birds have either died or have been killed as part of preventive measures.

Chicken sales have fallen, and many countries have banned Nigerian poultry imports.

In Scotland, local officials, reacting to confirmation that a dead mute swan had the disease, ordered all free-range poultry within a 2,500-sq.m. "wild bird risk area" to be brought inside. **AFP**

Weakened French PM rules out quitting over job reform

PARIS—FRENCH PRIME MINISTER Dominique de Villepin, fighting for his political life over an aborted youth jobs reform that has brought millions onto the streets, appeared Thursday to rule out resigning over the crisis. Unions have threatened more mass protests unless the reform is dropped by the end of next week, while wildcat student protests

continued to block road and rail traffic, as well as access to factories, a port and an airport.

Asked at a press conference if he intended to stand down, Villepin replied: "The president of the republic has entrusted me with a mission and I shall conduct this mission to its conclusion."

"It is time to put this crisis behind us, to restore calm and unity

to the country," he added.

"The immediate priority ... is naturally appeasement."

Villepin's authority has been badly undermined in the battle over the First Employment Contract (CPE), which President Jacques Chirac effectively suspended at the weekend, asking for a new law to be drawn up after talks with unions.

Responsibility for the negotiations has been handed to Villepin's powerful rival, ruling UMP party chief and Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, and a recent poll showed 45 percent of the public think the prime minister should step down.

Villepin urged conciliation to end the two-month crisis after

protests drew more than a million people—three million, unions said—into the streets for the second time in eight days on Tuesday.

He called on unions—holding a second day of talks with the ruling Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)—to "recognize that flexibility is necessary in order to provide employment for all." **AFP**

Trial resumes without Saddam

BAGHDAD—THE TRIAL OF SADDAM HUSSEIN on charges of crimes against humanity resumed on Thursday without the deposed Iraqi leader, but the ex-head of his revolutionary court took the stand to defend the execution of Shiite villagers in the 1980s.

Awad Ahmad al-Bander, the former chief judge of the revolutionary court and deputy head of Saddam's office, was the only defendant in court for the latest hearing in the trial over the massacre of 148 Shiites.

It was not known why Saddam, who was cross-examined for the first time Wednesday since the trial began in October, was not in court.

Chief judge Rauf Abdel Rahman later adjourned the trial after two hours for a one-day hearing on April 12.

Bander is one of Saddam's seven co-defendants accused over the massacre of villagers from Dujail after an attempt on the Iraq leader's life in 1982.

He was being cross-examined over testimony given in previous hearings indicated that 35 minors were among those executed over the Dujail assassination bid.

But Bander said the suspects were fairly tried, adding: "Even if their trial took place against the backdrop of the Iran war it was respectfully conducted and I do not think we violated any legal rules."

"The accused had all the rights and were defended by their lawyers," he said. "I am a judge and my deep conscience does not allow to sentence someone under 20 to death."

Bander's lawyers presented documents saying that some of the Dujail suspects had even plotted to overthrow Saddam's regime and stressed they all were adults.

"All the 148 accused were present when the judgment was delivered against them," Bander said, amid accusations that 46 had died in jails and were not executed. **AFP**

Apple software to help owners load Windows XP on Macs

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA—TO broaden its appeal in a Windows-dominated world, Apple Computer Inc. unveiled software to help owners of its new Intel-based Macs run not only its own operating system but also Microsoft Corp.'s rival software.

Apple's shares surged Wednesday as Wall Street bet the move would help Apple

grow its current worldwide personal computer market share beyond the current range of 3 percent to 4 percent by attracting more business and home users.

"It makes the Mac the most versatile computer on the market," said Tim Bajarin, a tech industry consultant at Creative Strategies.

Apple's new "Boot Camp" software, a "beta" test version available as a free download, lets computer users with a Windows XP installation disk load it on the Mac. Users could then switch between the two operating systems—using only one at a time—by rebooting, a process that could take a few minutes.

Users would have to get their own copy of Windows XP—the home edition retails for \$199 (euro162).

Apple shares rose nearly 10 percent on the news, raising its market capitalization to \$57.04 billion (euro46.52 billion)—an increase of more than \$5.1 billion (euro4.16 billion).

Van Baker, analyst at research

firm Gartner Inc., said Apple is removing one of the hurdles it faced in its long-standing battle to win over Windows-based converts.

"Consumers who were thinking about Macs but hesitated don't have to worry anymore about not being able to run PC software that didn't run on a Mac," Baker said. **AP**

No nudes, but Playboy mag still angers Indons

JAKARTA—THERE ARE NO nudes and the cover is anything but X-rated, but Playboy magazine still sparked a furor Friday when it hit newsstands in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

Indonesia's first edition of the monthly features pictures of underwear-clad women baring at most midriffs, thighs and cleavage, making it no more risqué than local editions of British men's magazines FHM and Maxim already on sale here.

And for some that was the problem.

While Muslim hardliners prepared to protest the launch of the magazine, some readers who paid 39,000 rupiah (about \$4) were disappointed by the lack of saucy pictures.

"It's sinful to read Playboy if there's no nudity!" a caller to Jakarta's 68H radio said.

"It's a scandal. There's no nude women in the magazine. I think we have been deceived," another caller complained.

Playboy carried an interview with Pramodya Ananta Toer, Indonesia's most prominent intellec-

tual and author, as well as a lengthy article on reconciliation between Indonesia and East Timor, which broke away from Jakarta in 1999.

But its toned-down look did not assuage the anger of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), a group notorious for carrying out violent anti-vice raids on nightspots in the past and which has vowed to hold protests.

"Our men will come to the magazine's office after Friday prayers. Let's see what's going to happen," FPI leader Muhammad Ruziq Shihab told AFP.

"Playboy is synonymous with pornography. The name itself means a man who likes to play around with women. Who can guarantee that they won't publish nudity in the future?" he asked.

Some newspaper vendors were too afraid to sell the magazine following a recent move by police to seize publications featuring scantily dressed women.

"I want to be on the safe side first, so at the moment I won't be selling Playboy," a vendor, Purbu, told Elshinta radio. **AFP**



A VENDOR shows an Indonesian version of the Playboy magazine at a newsstand in Jakarta, April 7. The toned-down edition of Playboy went on sale in the world's most populous Muslim nation. **AP**

Woman jailed for poisoning neighbor's cats

TACOMA, WASHINGTON—A woman was sentenced to 30 days in jail and 30 days of community service for killing her neighbor's three cats with a meal of antifreeze-soaked chicken.

Pierce County prosecutors said Donna Clark, 42, placed the deadly mix in her back yard last May.

Joe Ashbaugh's cats Billy, Topper and Kiki are the poisonous mix, and died.

Prosecutors originally charged Clark with felony first-degree animal cruelty. That charge was eventually reduced to a misdemeanor—poisoning animals—and Clark pleaded guilty to that.

Prosecutors said they couldn't prove Clark intended to cause suffering or knew the cats would be fatally poisoned.

Superior Court Judge Kathryn Nelson ordered Clark taken directly to jail after sentencing Thursday.

"Even though this is a misdemeanor, this is serious and you need to be held accountable for this grievous act," the judge said. **AP**

Editor Luverna B. Gueco

The WORLD

Bush cleared leaks on Iraq

Ex-White House aide Libby tags US president in court

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AUTHORIZED Iraq intelligence leaks ahead of the war, indicted former top White House aide I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby said in court papers obtained Thursday.

Libby is suspected of having leaked to the press the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame—a federal crime in the United States.

According to a document filed Wednesday by federal prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, Libby said he spoke to a reporter in July 2003 after learn-

ing from Vice President Dick Cheney that Bush had authorized intelligence leaks.

"Defendant's participation in a critical conversation with Judith Miller occurred only after the vice president advised defendant that the president specifically had authorized defendant

to disclose certain information in the NIE" (National Intelligence Estimate), the document said.

Libby denies charges of obstruction of justice, perjury and making false statements in an intrigue bound up in the US drive to war with Iraq in 2003.

His trial has been set for January 2007.

The case arose from a probe into the outing of Central Intelligence Agency spy Plame, exposed, Bush critics allege, by senior officials angry that her husband ambassador Joseph Wilson criticized the drive to

war with Iraq.

The court document filed this week does not indicate, however, that Bush or Cheney told Libby to unveil Plame.

But an opposition senator pounced on the revelation.

"The more we hear, the more it is clear this goes way beyond Scooter Libby. At the very least, President Bush and Vice President Cheney should fully inform the American people of any role in allowing classified information to be leaked," said Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer. **AFP**



AFP

REUTERS

Bush, Republican Party hit new lows in survey

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush's approval ratings hit a series of new lows in an AP-Ipsos poll that also shows Republicans surrendering their advantage on national security—grim election-year news for a party struggling to stay in power.

Democratic leaders predicted they will seize control of one or both chambers of Congress in November. Republicans said they feared the worst unless

the political landscape quickly changes.

"These numbers are scary. We've lost every advantage we've ever had," Republican pollster Tony Fabrizio said. "The good news is Democrats don't have much of a plan. The bad news is they may not need one."

There is more at stake than the careers of Republican lawmakers. A Democratic-led Congress could bury the last vestiges of Bush's legislative

agenda and subject the administration to high-profile investigations of the Iraq war, the CIA leak case, warrantless eavesdropping and other matters.

In the past two congressional elections, Republicans gained seats on the strength of Bush's popularity and a perception among voters that the Republican Party was stronger on national security than Democrats.

Those advantages are gone, accord-

ing to a survey of 1,003 adults conducted this week for The Associated Press by Ipsos, an international polling firm.

Just 36 percent of the public approves of Bush's job performance, his lowest-ever rating in AP-Ipsos polling. By contrast, the president's job approval rating was 47 percent among likely voters just before Election Day 2004 and a whopping 64 percent among registered voters in October 2002. **AP**

Mladic ready to surrender, says report

SARAJEVO—A BOSNIAN WEEKLY SAID ON Thursday top Bosnian Serb war crimes fugitive Ratko Mladic told UN chief prosecutor Carla del Ponte he would surrender soon, in a phone call placed by the Serbian prime minister from his office.

Slobodna Bosna quoted an unnamed source close to Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica as saying the premier called Mladic on March 29 when his guest Del Ponte asked him how he could be so sure of his promise to deliver him to The Hague tribunal within weeks.

The magazine said Kostunica put Mladic on speakerphone so Del Ponte could hear the fugitive in person, promising to surrender and asking for medical treatment. There was no immediate comment on the report from Kostunica's office.

The handover of Mladic is key to Serbia's bid to join the European Union in the coming years. Belgrade has repeatedly denied knowing where he is hiding or having contact with him, but Kostunica has pledged several times in recent weeks that the EU's conditions will be met soon.

The EU decided last week to carry on with a second round of so-called association talks with Serbia and Montenegro despite the fact that Mladic was still at large.

It did so after Del Ponte reported unspecified progress in Belgrade's cooperation with the tribunal, averting a suspension of the talks.

A Del Ponte spokesperson said on Thursday that Kostunica had persuaded Del Ponte during her visit that the former Bosnian Serb Army commander, who is indicted for genocide, would be handed over to The Hague this month.

He declined to say exactly how she was persuaded.

Slobodna Bosna said Kostunica had simply picked up the phone and called Mladic, who told the prosecutor he was ready to surrender but was seriously ill. **Reuters**

69 killed in Red Sea accident

DJIBOUTI—AT LEAST 69 PEOPLE drowned, 20 were missing and 36 injured after a boat carrying more than 200 capsized as it left the main harbor of the Red Sea state of Djibouti on Thursday, hospital sources said.

Mohammed Said Median, director of emergency services at the Tapelletier Hospital where most of the victims were brought, told AFP that 69 people had lost their lives and that seven of the 36 injured were suffering from serious wounds.

At least 77 people escaped without injury, he said.

There were conflicting accounts of the death toll from official Djibouti sources.

A spokesperson for the foreign ministry said at least 66 people had died while state television quoted the interior ministry as saying that at least 62 people had died.

Television reports said the boat, a traditional wooden vessel, was carrying between 250 and 300 people when the accident occurred around midday as it left the Port of Djibouti.

Officials at a French military base here said they believed the death toll could rise.

"We may find more bodies in the hull of the boat or in the sea," one told AFP.

The French ambassador to Djibouti, Jean-Paul Angeux, said the death toll remained unclear. **AFP**



FINE TIME IN A BEER SPA

Two unidentified girls relax, one taking a beer bath, both drinking a pint of Czech beer, March 17 in Chodova Plana near Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad) in a herbal beer spa, the latest Czech "therapeutic" offering the country's first "beer spa."

AFP

Olmert tasked with forming Israeli government

JERUSALEM—ACTING PREMIER Ehud Olmert was on Thursday tasked by President Moshe Katsav with forming Israel's next government, paving the way for a broad coalition set to redraw the borders of the Jewish state.

Olmert, who was made acting leader three months ago when his mentor and predecessor Ariel Sharon suffered a massive stroke,

led Kadima to a narrow win in last week's election but has won the endorsement of enough rival parties to establish a new coalition.

"I am honored to announce that I have decided to entrust Ehud Olmert with the task of forming the next government," Katsav told a news conference after talks with the Kadima party leader at his official residence in Jerusalem.

"I praise Olmert's announcement that he seeks to form a stable and broad government and that he has not rejected any party from joining it."

Katsav said a clear majority of newly elected MPs had recommended Olmert be given the job following talks with representatives of the 12 political parties who won seats in the 120-member parliament.

"During my meetings with the different factions, 78 MPs recommended that I appoint Mr Olmert. No other name was put forward."

Olmert pledged to complete the coalition talks as quickly as possible but said it would take time to ensure a lineup that could last until the scheduled end of his term of office in 2010.

"I will do my utmost to complete

this task as quickly as possible," said Olmert as he sat alongside Katsav.

"But forming a stable coalition which can remain in place throughout the next four years will not be easy."

Kadima won 29 seats in the March 28 election, less than the number predicted in opinion polls, but 10 more than nearest rivals and main coalition partners the center-left Labour party. **APP**

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Beermen whip Giants, wrest lead

By June Navarro

ANTIPOLO CITY—SAN MIGUEL Beer's high-octane offense proved too much for the league's best defensive team as the Beermen walloped the Purefoods Giants, 93-77, last night in the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup at the Ynares Center.

Danny Seigle registered his fourth double-double of the conference with 30 points on 9-of-18 field-goal shooting and 12 rebounds to help the Beermen nail a fourth straight victory.

However, it was the heroics of Dondon Montiveros in the third period that propelled the Beermen to the solo leadership with a 6-2 win-loss card.

Montiveros was a perfect 5-of-5 from the three-point region, finishing with 17 of his 19 points to give the Beermen a 76-59 spread entering the fourth.

With the victory, San Miguel Beer mentor Jong Uichico clinched his second coaching stint in the All-Star games to be held in Cagayan de Oro City on April 27-29.

The other coaching slot is a toss-up between Coca-Cola's Binky Ravis and Ryan Gregorio of Purefoods.

Should the Tigers beat Sta. Lucia Realty tomorrow, Ravis will be the next rookie coach to call the shots in the All-Star after Alfrancis Chua of Tanduay in 1999.

Barangay Ginebra coach Slot Tanquingco could still throw a wrench on the All-Star aspirations of Gregorio and Ravis, depending on the outcome of the Kings' meeting with the Beermen on Sunday.

"I wasn't really thinking about it (All-Star),"



DANNY Seigle of San Miguel dominates as the Beermen whipped the Purefoods Giants last night, 93-77.

said Uichico, who steered the veterans' squad to a 112-105 victory during the 2001 All-Star game. "It was just a bonus for all the hard work."

After posting the tournament's longest win streak at four games, the law of averages finally caught up with the Giants, who fell to 5-3 on the day Gregorio celebrated his 34th birthday.

The other half of San Miguel's revered 4Ds also delivered with Danny Idefonso and Dorian Peña chipping in 14 and 11 points each.

Norman Gonzales delivered the goods as Sta. Lucia Realty snapped a three-game skid with an 89-82 conquest of Alaska in the second game.

Gonzales tallied career-highs 20 points, including five of five triple attempts, and 13 rebounds as the Realtors improved to 2-5. Alaska fell to 3-5.

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 93—Seigle 30, Montiveros 19, Idefonso 14, Peña 11, Cablay 6, Categuio 5, Razacla 4, Noble 4, Kong 0, Lopez 0, Gonzales 0, Adriano 0.

PUREFOODS 77—Tejada 17, Yap 12, Limpot 10, Raymundo 10, Pingris 7, Yap R 7, Ardad 6, Castillo 4, Evangelista 2, Yee 2, Bilonas 0.

Quarters: 21-14, 40-31, 76-59, 93-77

Second Game

STA. LUCIA 89—Gonzales 20, Mendoza 17, Ornelan 13, Cabagnot 12, Torion 9, Torionia 8, Calilag 6, Agapito 4, Casti 0, Aquino 0.

ALASKA 82—Cortez 25, Belasco 23, Dela Cruz 13, Allado 9, Thoss 4, Hugnetan 4, Hawkins 2, Carasco 2, Wilson 0, Bejar 0. Quarters: 26-18, 49-47, 72-51, 89-82

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ASIAN AQUATHLON SEA Games bets open campaign today

By Jasmine W. Payo

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES VETERANS ARLAND Macasieb and Noel Salvador will carry the country's colors in the Asian Aquathlon Championship today at The Lakeshore in Mexico, Pampanga.

The two Filipinos will be vying for the title in the 2.5 kilometer run-1K swim-2.5K run event against more than 100 participants from Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, South Korea and Australia.

Tomorrow, it will be national champion Ryan Mendoza's turn to spearhead the Philippine campaign in the Asian Duathlon Championship at the Clark Expo grounds in Clark Field, Pampanga.

Triathlon Association of the Philippines president

Tom Carrasco predicted a close fight in aquathlon between host Philippines and Hong Kong, which is fielding a formidable under-23 contingent.

South Korea, which will be fielding its tough national squad, is the team to beat in the duathlon competition.

But Carrasco said the Philippines will field an impressive aquathlon roster, which includes 2006 national age-group triathlon champion Kim Mangrobang of the Dominican College in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, last year's age group winner Gerrie Calinawan, under-23 female champion Lea Coline Langit, Mimi Lucas and junior triathletes Mikko Quisala and Joash Serrano.

Mendoza is fresh off his victory in the Asian

Duathlon Cup in Thailand. Joining him in the 10K run-40K bike-5K run event are Jeffrey Valdes, Augusto Benedicto and Joseph Millanes.

"We are confident that our local athletes will deliver in both the aquathlon and the duathlon events," said Carrasco.

Other favorites in the duathlon race are Takashi Nakata and Kodo Hiramatsu of Japan, Australian duathlon champion Rafael Bugh, Sharon Abdullah of Malaysia and Kenta Ando of Malaysia.

Over 50 youngsters aged 15 years and below will also be competing in the kiddie triathlon today.

"This is our youth triathlon development program that in the past has helped us expand our base of triathletes," said Carrasco.

Jewels seek 5th straight vs Sparks

SO WHAT KEEPS THE MONTAÑA JEWELS GOING? Just plain hard work, according to coach Neil Parado, who will seek a fifth straight win when the Jewels tackle the Toyota Otis Sparks in the PBL Unity Cup at 4 p.m. today at the San Andres Gym.

"We just prepare well for every game," said Parado. "Right from the start, we've always said we're here to win."

Meanwhile, the Rain or Shine Elasto Painters will try to recover from their first loss when they oppose the rookie Teletex Titans at 2 p.m.

After posting only three wins in the recent Heroes' Cup, Toyota Otis has already matched that record in four games to join title favorite Rain or Shine in second place.

And coach Louie Alas believes that his Sparks, the cellar dwellers in the last two confer-

STANDINGS

	W	L
Montaña	4	0
R. or Shine	3	1
Toyota Otis	3	1
G. Goose	2	2
Magnolia	2	2
Hapee-PCU	1	3
Teletex	1	3
Harbour Centre	0	4

GAMES TODAY
(Diaz College Sports Center)

2 p.m. - Rain or Shine vs Teletex
4 p.m. - Montaña vs Toyota Otis

ences, can keep up with the seasoned Jewels.

"We can match up with their backcourt, but their advantage is their experience," said Alas. "Most of their starters are PBA draftees, plus there's Alex Compton."

Parado, too, had singled out Compton's performance as one of the key factors in the Jewels' strong start.

"Even if he doesn't score, there's his leadership inside the court," said Parado. "He does many things for us, especially in assists."

The Jewels proved to be the superior team when they battled the Elasto Painters for the solo



GRANNY Goose's Dennis Concha fakes Hapee's Gabby Espinas out of position in their PBL game recently. ERIC ARANZAS

lead last Tuesday.

Even with a sprained ankle, the 5-foot-8 Froilan Baguion took charge in the closing minutes to lead the Jewels past the towering Painters, 60-58.

Baguion, named Player of the Week by the PBL Press Corps, shot 10 straight points in the last

three minutes.

The heavily favored Painters are expected again to turn to Jojo Tangkay, Marvin Ortiguerra, Jay-R Reyes and new 6-foot 10 recruit Samigue Eman.

Tangkay, last conference's MVP, scored 23 points in his last outing, Jasmine W. Payo

Misamis Oriental cagers pull rug from under Iligan

CAGAYAN DE ORO—PRYCE PHARMA-MisOr stunned erstwhile unbeaten Iligan City, 94-80, Wednesday in the ML Kwarto Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association (MV-BA) First Conference at the Xavier University Gym.

Pryce Pharma caught Iligan napping in the second period with a balanced attack to seize control for good. The team of MV-BA chair Gov. Oscar Moreno and coach Rex Salvana then went to Dondon Mendoza and Jesson Alfeche in the third period to erect its biggest lead, 68-54.

Iligan tried to close the gap but three straight baskets by center Marvin Mercado and five free throws down the stretch by guard Ramil Tagupa ensured Pryce Pharma's third win in seven games in the tournament backed by ML Kwarto Padala, Nature's Spring Drinking Water, Cokaliong Shipping Lines, Panasonic, Molten and Sulpicio Lines.

Iligan saw its winning run end at four games but still remained on top of the Mindanao Division.

Alfeche led Pryce Pharma with 18 points followed by Mercado with 16. Three other players scored in twin digits as Mendoza chipped in 13, Jessie Lumantas

VISAYAS DIVISION STANDINGS

	W	L
M. Lhu. Her-Cebu	3	0
Landmasters-Toledo	1	1
Toyota-Iloilo	0	1
Mantaw Traders	0	2
West Negros	x	x

MINDANAO DIVISION STANDINGS

	W	L
Iligan City	4	1
PacMan-GenSan	5	2
Montaña-Davao	3	3
Pryce Pharma	3	4
Cagayan de Oro	0	5

GAME TODAY (Maramag, Bukidnon)
5:30 p.m. - Montaña Pawnshop-Davao vs Iligan City

scored 11 and Tagupa added 10.

Erickson Araman paced Iligan with 17 while Alex Bognot added 16 and Aries Gloria 13.

The scores:
PRYCE PHARMA-MISOR 94—Alfeche 18, Mercado 16, Mendoza 13, Lumantas 11, Tagupa 10, Numeran 8, Carrelas 7, Trumpeta 6, Saudsod 4, Radulosa 1, Acaylar 0, Rivera 0.

ILIGAN CITY 80—Araman 17, Bognot 16, Gloria 13, Tundag 8, Bagulo 8, Bangloy 5, Sereno 4, Pening 4, Cosingan 3, Pening 2, Sapler 0.

Quarters: 23-22, 48-38, 70-61, 94-80

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April 28 & 29 - Sri Elena Golf Club, Sri Elena, Laguna

April 30 - Negros Occidental Golf & Country Club

April 6 - Forest Hills Golf & Country Club, Inc. Antipolo City

April 12 - Marikina Southwoods Golf & Country Club, Carmona, Cavite

April 18 & 19 - Carapay Golf & Country Club, Baguio

April 24 - Balat Golf & Country Club, Manila

April 22 - Eagle Ridge Golf & Country Club, Gen. Santos, Cebu

April 28 - La Paz Golf & Country Club, Cagayan de Oro

Stage 1: Club Qualifying Tournament

Stage 2: Satellite Elimination in each district

Stage 3: Grand Finals

North Cotabato Braves stun host Taguig in NBC

TAGUIG CITY—NORTH COTABATO GOT back on the winning track by holding off host Forward Taguig, 71-68, Wednesday in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the CP Tunga gym here.

Edu Allado started anew for Gov. Manny Pinof's Braves by firing 21 points, including back-to-back triples at the 7:18 mark of the final canto that gave North Cotabato a 69-55 advantage.

The Braves lost to Bacchus/Harbour Centre last Tuesday at the start of their northern swing in the tournament supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

"Naribago sila nang unang game namin sa (They were listless during our first game at) Lyceum," said North Cotabato coach Buboy Tanigue after his boys scored their third win in five games. "Alam naming malakas ang Taguig kaya ang instruction ko, depensahan lahat (We knew how tough Taguig is, so my instruction was to defend each one of them)."

Mayor Lawrence Cruz's Iligan Crusaders beat the Laguna Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro, 83-75, in the other game.

The Crusaders banked on Marlon Kalaw,

Ferdie Go and last year's MVP Chris Nicdao in scoring their third win in four games.

Kalaw, Go and Nicdao tallied 21, 15 and 14 points, respectively.

Yesterday's game at the Urdaneta Sports Center in Pangasinan pitting NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla's Spring Cooking Oil-Paranaque against Iligan and the Braves versus the Pangasinan Hundred Islands were still being played at press time.

The Cooking Oil Masters were gunning for their third straight win.

The scores:
ILIGAN 83—Kalaw 21, Go 15, Nicdao 14, Ormeling 12, Hubalde 4, Sanchez 3, Taguines 2, Ayonella 2, Espinosa 2, Matias 2.

LAGUNA 75—August 20, Rode 9, Irtano 9, Proceso 7, Almirante 7, Nolasco 6, Domingo 6, Bayon 5, Nathidad 4, Sy 2.

Quarters: 28-14, 50-33, 62-57, 83-75

Homegrown Cup features Ateneo-La Salle rivalry

THE PAST AND THE future of bitter rivals De La Salle and Ateneo clash at the resumption of the Total-Filoli-Flying V Homegrown Cup today at the San Juan gym.

The AL-Stars clash at 2:30 p.m. after the 1 p.m. encounter between the schools' high school teams in the tournament sponsored by Globe and Shell and supported by Bank of Commerce, Banco de Oro, Flying V Biodiesel, Innuivit, Accel, Gerry's Grill, Millennium Plans, Inihaw Circle, PBCComm

and Security Bank.

The two squads occupy both ends of the pole La Salle, behind Tony Boy Espinosa, Noli Locsin, Johnedel Cardel, Tyrone Bautista, Allen Patrimonio, Dwight Lago and Dominique Uy, is 2-0, having beaten Lerran and Far Eastern University.

Ateneo, meanwhile, still has to make a dent after two games, and key Blue Eagle players Ramier Sison, Jimmy Tioseco, Epok Quampo and Gene Añable face rough sailing against the famed Green Archers.

But throw all statistics out the window. When these two universities meet, it's all about heart.

La Salle-Greenhills edged the Lerran, 68-65 and demolished the FEU Baby Tamaraws 79-70 while the Ateneo Eagles rebounded from a loss to the SBC Red Cubs by besting the Squires 70-65.

GAMES TODAY
(San Juan Gym)

1 p.m. - Ateneo vs La Salle (High School/All-Star)
--

GAMES TOMORROW
(San Juan Gym)

1 p.m. - San Beda vs Lerran (HS/AS)
3 p.m. - UP vs FEU (HS/AS)

Pacquiao tiff lures Barrera, Morales

Ringside seats for Mexican legends

By Salven Lagumbay
Contributor

EXPECT NO LESS THAN Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales to be at ringside when leathers start flying for the July 2 WBC International super featherweight championship fight between Manny Pacquiao and Mexico's Oscar Larios.

A source from the Manny Pacquiao Promotions intimated yesterday that Golden Boy Promotions, the promotional outfit which handles Barrera and Larios, wants no less than Barrera to be part of the television panel that will cover the title fight.

"Maybe Golden Boy Promotions wants to reveal the other side of Barrera, that of being a boxing analyst," the source said. "Of course, he (Barrera) will be doing the commentary in Spanish, since he hardly speaks English. And I think, that's an added attraction to the fight."

Eric Pineda, top man of the MPP, also revealed in a separate interview yesterday that Erik



PACQUIAO



MORALES

Morales would be invited by ABS-CBN to be at ringside for the fight.

The giant network, according to Pineda, will even offer Morales a slot in a Mexican telenovela for Filipino viewers.

One source, however, cautioned that Barrera's stint here will all depend on whether or not ABS-CBN, which broadcasts the fight, would

allow a Mexican TV crew to do a live broadcast. Barrera is slated to make a world title defense against former Olympian Rocky Juarez at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on May 20.

Barrera, nicknamed the "Baby-Faced Assassin," has a standing offer for a Nov. 4 bout with Pacquiao, but the RP boxing hero has a contract to fight Erik Morales in a rubber match in September or October.

The list of possible guests for the big card also includes Oscar De La Hoya, Bernard Hopkins, and possibly Mike Tyson or the great Muhammad Ali, whose classic "Thrilla in Manila" was also held at the Big Dome in 1975.

Laurente fails in Paba title bid

DENNIS LAURENTE OF THE PHILIPPINES failed in his bid for the Pan-Asian Boxing Association (Paba) light welterweight title when he lost by technical decision to Indonesian Daudy Bahari Thursday night at the Indosiar Studio in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Scores were 116-108, 115-110, 116-109, all for Bahari, although ringside reports from Indonesian media said referee Chalarn Prayadsab of Thailand made unusual two-point deductions from Laurente on two occasions.

Bahari, confused by Laurente's style, reportedly had a hard time against the Filipino fighter.

However, a two-point deduction was slapped

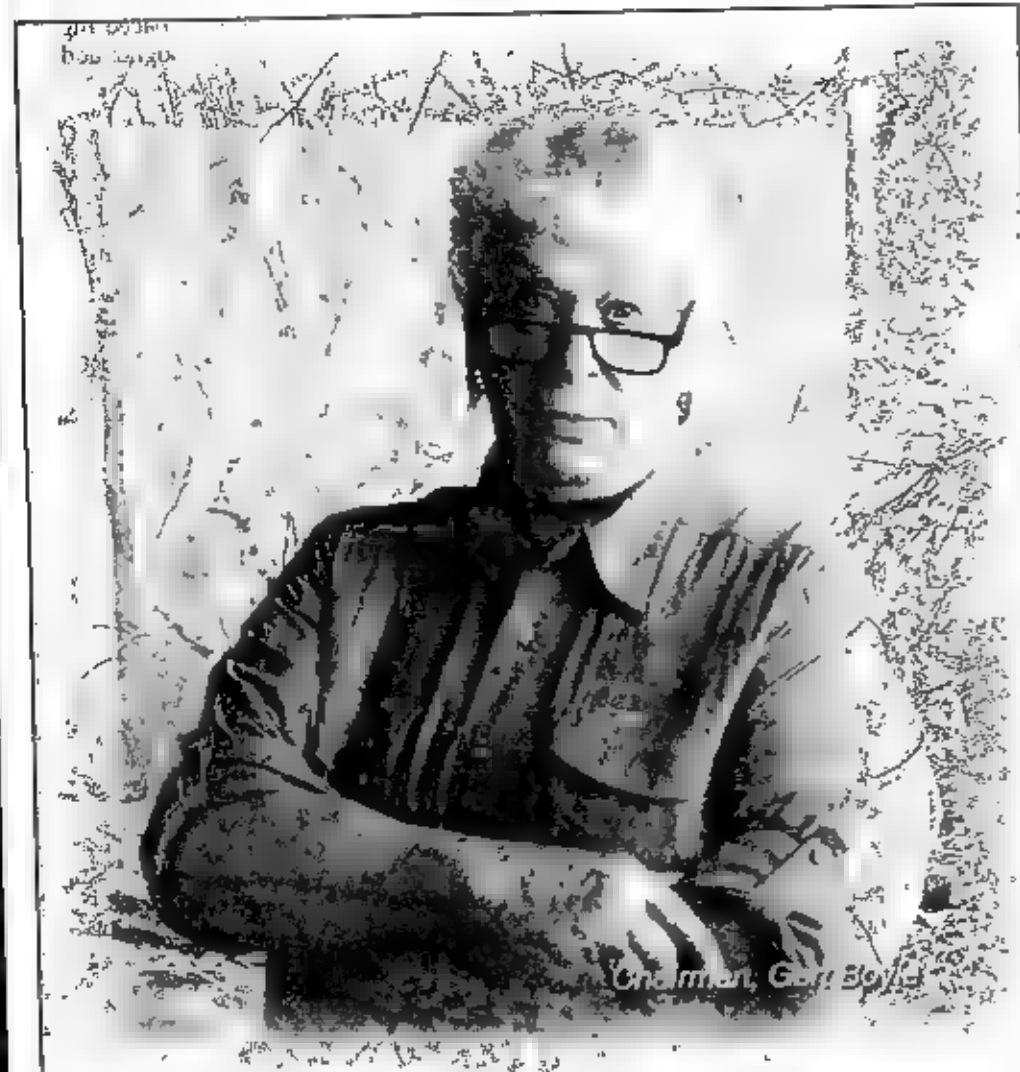
by Prayadsab on Laurente in round nine following a clash of heads which resulted in a cut on Bahari's left eyelid.

Laurente pressed his attack in the 10th to 12th rounds hoping to score a knockout. To his surprise, the fight was stopped in the middle of the final round, and Prayadsab again took two points off Laurente for an "unintentional" headbutt.

Indon writer Jeffrey Pamungkas, reporting from ringside, said the deduction was "incorrect."

Pino Bahari, brother of Daudy and promoter of the fight, told this writer that the fight was stopped due to an intentional headbutt.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor



Chairman, Geri Boyle

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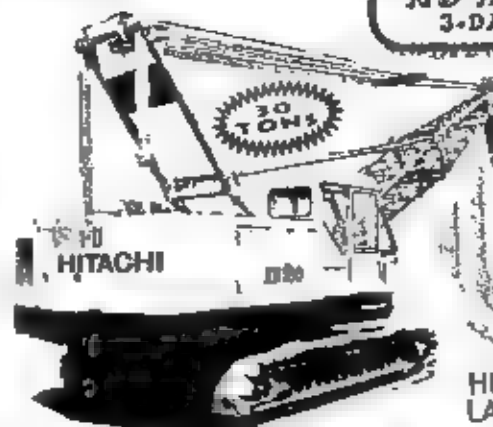
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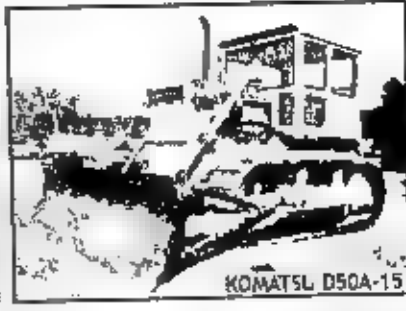
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Why Pacman and Kris are afraid of BIR

TODAY, YOU SEE Manny Pacquiao's face and form everywhere. Almost just as much as Kris Aquino's.

Like Kris, Manny is starting to build a huge fortune on product endorsements although, at this point, it's hard to tell who between the two is ahead in terms of revenue generated.

Admittedly, Kris is still the more visible. But that's probably because she's a woman with the face and the curves that are pleasant to the eye. I see more posters and billboards of Kris than I do of Manny.

However, I'm told by friends from advertising that Manny is starting to collect more revenue from ads than Kris. They say he is now more in demand than the quiz show host and can command a bigger talent fee because his market includes the rich and poor, young and old, male and female.

"Across the board," as marketing men would put it.

Out of curiosity, I tried to look for someone who could provide me a complete list of the products Kris is endorsing.

Since I couldn't find this person, I tried to recall the contents of the gift basket she gave media last Christmas, and her print and television commercials.

I can't remember the other cosmetics in the gift box, but I do recall the Kissa soap, the cans of San Miguel Beer and Purefoods Chunkee corned beef. I was looking for a Smart cellphone but there was none.

A fellow scribe who plies the route from Hagonoy, Bulacan to the Araneta Coliseum said Kris has much, much more product endorsements on outdoor billboards like Bench where she is portrayed seating atop husband James Yap. The scribe also vaguely remembers seeing Kris' bag and tile ads along Edsa, but doesn't remember the brand, which means it is not as effective as her other products which has stronger recall.

Kris and Manny are both endorsing San Miguel Beer and Smart, two of the biggest advertisers in the country. The two are together in a new San Miguel Beer commercial.

For Manny, I found just the right guy who could give me a complete list of his endorsements.

"Magnolia, McDonald's, Alaxan, Circulan, Darlington socks, Dolly Tuna, Smart, ML Kuwarta-Padala, Extreme Magic Sing, No Fear and MP Apparel (Manny Pacquiao)," recited Manny's marketing man Reli de Leon.

The total number is 11 and still growing, according to Reli.

I tried to get some numbers from him, but Reli is scared of the BIR.

Even Orville Roque and Henry Pabian, co-owners of The Asura Group, distributor of Extreme Magic Sing (handheld video microphone) would not reveal the amount they paid Pacman for a television ad that would run for 12 months.

"Maliit lang, nowhere near the talent fee San Miguel and Smart gave him," they said, explaining that Manny is an old friend.

Orville and Henry could also be scared of the BIR.

Yayoy Alcorseba, Cebu City councilor and Kwarta Padala coach, was just as mum on numbers as the others. Yayoy arrived in Manila last Thursday to oversee the production of the Michel Lhuillier Kwarta Padala television commercial, starring Pacman.

More importantly though, Yayoy is here to promote the Mindanao-Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) which is being sponsored by Michel Lhuillier.

Yayoy said there are 10 teams in the MVBA, all of them former members of the NBC.

"But coming to Manila for the NBC games has become too costly for the Mindanao and Visayas teams, that's why we decided to form the MVBA where the games will be played in our turf. Naka-save na kami considerably, marami pang nanonood. In Manila, nobody ever watches our games which are played in practice venues," Yayoy said.

In a press statement he issued yesterday, BAP president Joey Lina said he would continue knocking on the POG door for reinstatement "until my knuckles hurt."

Frankly, I don't think that door will open even if Joey's knuckles eventually chip off. What will he do if it stays shut?

"I'll cross the bridge when I get there. The Holy Week is approaching, I will pray for enlightenment on the best course of action," Joey said.

In case he needs my help, I have a hotline to Papa Doc Duvalier.

IN HUDDLE



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Bayron top pick as C'tagan Open tees off

By Musong R. Castillo

CALATAGAN, BATANGAS—JAY BAYRON, an excellent second man in team play but never a major tournament winner in recent past, leads a crack field that tees off today in the third Calatagan Amateur Open presented by the Bank of Commerce here.

Bayron has played great in team events for the National team, the most recent being the gold medal conquest by the Filipinos over Singapore in the Southeast Asian Games last year.

But with Juvie Pagunsan, the first Calatagan Am winner in 2004, and Artemio Murakami now pros, Bayron, 26, has been picked by many as top prospect this time.

"Becoming the next RP Team spearhead is easier said than done," Bayron told the Inquirer in Filipino after a practice round at the tough Robert Trent Jones creation yesterday. "I could be the most senior and experienced in the RP team pool, but that does not guarantee me anything."

Former RP Am champ and DHL winner Jun Berna is also in the field, like Canlubang stalwarts Abe Rosal, Dave Hernandez and Tommy Manotoc.

National Caddies' Open product Joseph Labajo is the defending champion and other NCO bets in the field include Mark Fernando, Rufino Bayron, Paul Echavez, Zaniel Boy Glalon and the champions the past two years—Jonel Ababa and Jessie Bal-

asabas.

The crack field will have to contend with the heavily wooded and long par-72 layout, which has been in championship shape since the start of the year. The 36-hole tournament is actually the third major event to be held here after the Caddies' Open and the Kalachuchi Classic, the club's annual member-guest tournament last March 25.

La Salle football Hall-of-Famer Albert MG Garcia and Jimmy Zenasenos pocketed the overall team championship in the Kalachuchi after shooting a gross 72, while Jean Henri Lhuillier and guest Joey Reyes teamed up for 60 points and the overall net championship.



BAYRONI: Esler said than done

MY GAMES

Tankers boost Binondo

MEDAL STANDINGS	G	S	B
Binondo	42	28	12
Paco	33	24	30
Pandacan	31	28	24
Dapitan	28	23	20
Abad Santos	23	23	11
Ka Maynua	7	11	10
Malate	6	4	3
Dagupan	5	5	0
San Miguel	4	5	4
Velasquez	4	1	0
Sta. Cruz	3	3	2
Sta. Mesa	3	1	2
Ermita	2	5	3
Don Bosco	2	0	1
Sta. Ana	1	2	2
Gagalangin	1	0	1

By Marc Anthony Reyes

RUSSEL PLATA and RENZ EVANGELISTA shone for the City College of Manila swimmers who boosted Binondo ahead in the 5th Manila Youth Games at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Aquatic Center yesterday.

The 16-year-old Plata lorded it over in the boys' 15-18 years 50-meter freestyle, 50-m butterfly, 50-m breaststroke, 50-m backstroke and 100-m free, while Evangelista topped the boys' 10 under 25-m fly, 25-m back, and 25-m free.

With CCM hauling in the most number



QUICKEST: Irvin Fabellon (center) of Letran tops his heat of the 100-meter dash in yesterday's athletics competitions at the Rizal Memorial track oval.

of golds on the last day of swimming competitions with 10, Binondo raised its gold-silver-bronze tally of 42-25-12 which remains unsafe as the finals of most of the 14 sports disciplines are scheduled today.

Erstwhile leader Dapitan not only failed to cash in from the pool but in other fronts

as well and slid to fourth place with a 28-23-20 count, behind Paco (33-24-30) and Pandacan (31-28-24) in the meet organized by the Manila Sports Council (Masco) chaired by Arnold "Ali" Arianza.

In athletics, Paridel Elementary School's Raine Reyes took the gold in the

boys' 12-under shotput, heaving the ball to a distance of 7.51 meters on his first try to beat schoolmate Aljie Andro (5.36m) and Daniel Godia of Albert ES (4.91m).

Basco's Ma. Glizela Bacanaya ruled the girls' 12-under shotput, besting teammate Jessica Orapa and R. Palma ES' Elisha Obedoza. Bacanaya threw 3.62m to rule the event over Orapa and Obedoza, who did 3.45m and 3.31m, respectively.

Randolph Hernandez of Letran captured the gold in the 16-17 shotput with an effort of 12.12m. He defeated Elezer Barcebal of District 4-Kamaynila (8.85m) and Jeric Mashin of District 6 (8.11m).

Also scoring in the pool for CCM was Daniela de Castro, who snared the gold in the girls' 13-14 50-m fly and 50-m back in the Games presented by Converse with support from the PSC, Pagcor, San Miguel Corp., Super Perry, Montana Pawnshop, Globe Telecoms, Milo, Air21, IntraSports, and Concept Movers.

"With two more days of action, we expect a more heated and spirited competition among the city's best in and out-of-school athletes," said Arianza.

Smokey Mountain-A nipped Smokey Mountain-B, 9-8, in the boys' baseball elementary division to take the gold medal while Antonio Villegas HS downed Smokey Mountain, 15-12, to top boys' baseball in the high school category.

Unheralded Macala stuns Garma in nat'l finals; Villamayor scores

UNHERALDED ALLAN MACALA upset International Master Chito Garma in the second round of the National Chess Championships Finals for men's and women's Friday at the Market Place Shopping Mall in Gen. Kalantong St., Mandaluyong City.

Macala, seeded 52nd, won with the black pieces after 83 moves of a Ruy Lopez Opening and with 2 points grabbed a share of the lead in the tournament serving as qualifier for the Chess Olympiad set in Turin, Italy, next month.

"Bamba lang (I got lucky)," said Macala of Marikina, who beat Leo Zarrudo in the first round late Thursday.

Also posting their second straight victory in the men's side were third seed Grandmaster Bong Villamayor, sixth seed IM Ronald Dabiao, IM Petronio Roca, NM Darwin Laylo, 12th seed IM Barlo Nadera and NM Perandito Pisan.

The Singapore-based Villamayor crushed Jobanne Tabada after 54 moves of a Gruenfeld Defense and bolstered his bid to join seeded GMs Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Joey Antonio in the Philippine Olympiad team.

Dabiao nipped NM Rolando Andador, Roca trounced Leodegario Ricana, Laylo outplayed Allan Cantorjos, Nadera bested NM Jake de la Cruz and Pisan beat

IM Ronald Bancod.

Top seed GM Nelson Mariano, fourth seed IM Jayson Gonzales, fifth seed IM Richard Bitoon and 14th seed NM Edgardo Garma trailed at 1.5 points.

Mariano drew with NM Nicomedes Alsangco, Gonzales settled for a truce with Dino Baileer; Bitoon split the point with NM Roland Joseph Perez and Garma halved the point with David Elorta.

In women's play, Mallorca Olympian WNM Loresy Guizon beat Geneline de Ramos to share the lead with Shercla Cua and WNM Catherine Perena. They have 2.0 points each. Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Espiritu favored as CSI hits road

ARMYMAN VICTOR ESPIRITU SETS OUT AS the prohibitive favorite as he guns for a second straight victory in the Philamlife Cycling Search Invitational (CSI) Criterion Race which fires off today in Clark Field in Pampanga.

Espiritu, the former Asian and local tour king, turned in an impressive run the last time out where he bested fellow veteran campaigner Lloyd Reynante to capture the third leg honors in the men's elite and under-23 class of the monthly event presented by Philamlife.

Clark Devt. Corp president Antonio Ng and Frank Madiangbayan, manager of CDC customer service department, will grace the event serving as the fourth stage of a 10-leg series organized by Treo Sales and Marketing Corp. to keep the country's bumper crop of riders in shape and at the same time discover fresh talents.



MOTO CHAMP: Jimboy Marcelo (center) of Team Total/Rudy Project Motoworld presents the Open Production and Open Enduro Championship trophies he won in the Narra Invitational Motocross and the Expert first runner-up trophies in the Puerto Princess City Asian Motocross Championship both held recently in Palawan to Malou Espina, corporate affairs manager of Totalfinancil Phils. Corp. Marcelo, the 2005 Enduro King and Open Enduro Rider of the Year, is also backed by Zeus Helmets and Sinisalo racewear. At right is team manager Engr. Benjie Marcelo.

SPORTSWATCH

Jaen VGB Firefly tops NCA derby

JAEN VGB FIREFLY WON ITS SEVENTH ROUND FIGHT WITH BR RIO THURSDAY at the Roligon Mega Cockpit to score 6 points and grab the championship in the NCA's first 7-cock derby for April. It was the first time in the history of the National Cockers Association that a provincial entry won the championship. Jaen VGB Firefly, owned by Elian Napano of Nueva Ecija, yielded to Binangonan Balbina of Ilo Ynares in the fifth round. Jaen won all three fights in the first leg of the derby. Five of the entries tied for second place with five points each: Firefly RM 100, Pichay Spartans of Bulit Pichay and Rey Briones Jade Resort of Arman Santos, Binangonan Balbina of Ilo Ynares and Iggy Arroyo's Red Creek II. With 4.5 points were Wild wing Sundano of Romina Puno and Red Creek I, also of Arroyo. Mulewin AA of Rudy Albano and Jimmy Ang, and Lucky Rin Freilly Binangonan of Rio de Guzman posted 3.5 points each. The next NCA 7-cock derby at Roligon starts on April 18.

82 fights featured at Roligon

COCKFIGHT AFICIONADOS OF METRO MANILA WILL BE TREATED TO another exciting duel today at the 15,000-seat and newly renovated Roligon Mega Cockpit when the Alida Farms 4-cock derby blasts off at 4 p.m. with 82 fights. Awaiting the winners is P400,000 for an entry fee of P7,700. Meanwhile, Roligon's Tukaan 5-cock derby slated on April 29, May 2, 4 and 6 continues to draw participants. For reservation of cockhouses, call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (look for Jona or Shirley). More than 200 cockers are expected to vie for P2 million in prizes. Entry fee is P8,800.

Big Las Piñas cockfest set today

INTERESTING MATCH-UPS OF PROMINENT COCKERS WILL BE THE highlight of Las Piñas Coliseum's Bigtime Bakbakan 5-cock derby today. The first of 80 fights sizzles at 4 p.m. Sabang Idoi Patrick Antonio takes on his perennial rival Sonny Lapon, the famous Sweater man; host Gerry Ramos will be pitted against Lito Orillaza of WTJ Group; world champion Boy de Rosa goes up against Pol Estrellado and Mayor Nene Aguilera battles former Sen. Ramon Revilla. Consortium manager Alex Tobias said that a cash prize of P1 million is at stake. For details, call 873-1040 and 874-3810.

2 Toyota cars for fastest winners

TWO BRAND NEW TOYOTA CARS, NOW ON DISPLAY AT MAKATI COLISEUM lobby, will be given away in the Summer Salpukan 8-cock derby on April 28, 29, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13. Sponsor is 8-Meg. Derby ace promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co said that a Toyota Vios will go to the participant (running for champion only) with the fastest winning time. The Toyota Altis goes to the participant with the fastest combined winning time for six fights. The total prize is P4.4 million, including P3 million in cash. Entry fee is P11,000. Contact 898-3545 or 895-6475 (Joan or Stephanie).

BRC drag racing revs up today

SOME 50 DRIVERS ARE EXPECTED TO COMPETE for the titles at stake today as the Red Horse-PCSO National Drag Racing Championship Series launches its 2006 season at the drag strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit.

The country's finest drag racers will vie for honors in the Quick 8, the Pro class, Sportsman Class, Hot Street, and the Thunder Class for 1983 model cars or older.

But the bigger challenge of this event sponsored by Red Horse Beer, Philippine Charity

Sweepstakes Office and supported by Pilipinas Shell, Denso, Casino Papiño and Sparco is to beat the track record of 11.833 seconds set last year by Dave Jota of Blanche Racing.

BRC Drag Racing director Pili G. An urges all participants to join the driver's briefing at 8 a.m. Leo Joel Cordero, the 2005 Golden Wheel Drag Racing Driver of the Year, is vying for back-to-back titles as he dons the colors of Blanche Racing, which also boast of two equally talented drivers Walter Pazon and Sheidon Chua.

Race 1—(Or/Tr)—Casanova (5), Concorde (2), Mee Que Nade (1), Vaid Hazi (3)
Race 2—(Or/Tr)—Tito Threat (4), Hemlin Guest (1), Bolton Lancia (7), Pretty Pretty Girl (6)
Race 3—(Or/Tr)—Playing Cool (8), Power Of Longevity (5), Kawa Pag-Asa Ko (3), Pulman Beauty (1)
Race 4—(Or/Tr)—Nirvo Land (4), Monby Man (6), Tree Jeanie (1), U Are My Sunshine (3)
Race 5—(Or/Tr)—Without Warning (3), Red Discreed (6), Raining Gains (2), High Spirit (1)
Race 6—(Or/Tr)—Threshops (8)

Auribula (2), Pentagon (7), Maximum Impact (3), Mowman/Ossa Award (1)
Race 7—(Or/Tr)—Mikroya (6), Popsy Dog Tail (3), Virginia (1), Wai Alot (4)
Race 8—(Or/Tr)—Il Amorosa (1), Remus (7), Time Deposi (10), Cool Moto (8), Damselina Dancer (2)
Race 9—(Or/Tr)—Empura Lady

(5), El Old (5), Collective Dreams (9), Divine Right (8), Eden's Quest (1)
Race 10—(Or/Tr)—Key Element (6), Lucky Hoo (5), Shadowlax (8), Sharapova (1), Tiger Rally (1)
Race 11—(Or/Tr)—Anytime Anywhere (2), Prouda (2), Reign Of Roses (5), Mano Po (6), American Road (8)
Race 12—(Or/Tr)—Aminin (6), Blakelock (5), Truly Impressive (7), Harry Prince (8)
Race 13—(Super Or/Tr)—Leading Man (8), Express Strike (4), Hubagat (7), Gentleman's Lady (3), Akashnikov (2), Earth Angel (6)

Nets post 14th consecutive victory

NEW YORK—RICHARD JEFFERSON scored a season-high 40 points to help the New Jersey Nets extend their National Basketball Association winning streak to 14 games with a 113-102 victory over the Charlotte Bobcats on Thursday.

The Nets tied a franchise record for longest run of victories set in 2004, and broke a tie with Dallas for the NBA's longest winning streak this season.

Jason Kidd had his 74th career triple double for the Nets, picking up his last re-

bound in the final minute to complete his latest.

"I had about 300 people in my ear telling me about the rebound thing," New Jersey coach Lawrence Frank kidded reporters.

Kidd had 13 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds. The veteran ranks fourth in career triple doubles, now just four behind the great Wilt Chamberlain.

Jefferson scored 26 of his points in the second half and added 11 rebounds. Vince Carter added 20 points for the Nets.

Clifford Robinson added 14 points for the Nets, who rose to 46-28. The Nets have clinched the Atlantic Division title and have the third seed in the East.

Reuters

COMPLETE RESULTS: Chicago 99, Philadelphia 92; Orlando 108, Milwaukee 105; Atlanta 101, Minnesota 99; Indiana 111, Toronto 103; Washington 108, Boston 91; NY Knicks 96, Cleveland 94; Oklahoma City 114, Golden State 109 (OT); Sacramento 87, San Antonio 87; Portland 76, Houston 75; LA Clippers 119, Phoenix 105. **SOLAR Sports** will air the Detroit-Orlando tussle at 7 a.m. today.



KOBE Bryant looks up after being called for his fifth personal foul. **AP**

Euro attack fizzles out at Augusta

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—THE EUROPEAN challenge at the Masters got off to a sticky start Thursday with only David Howell managing to duck under par.

The ever-improving Englishman came in with a scrambling one-under 71 to stand four strokes off the lead set by Fiji's Vijay Singh.

Next best on even par were Spanish pair Miguel Angel Jimenez and Sergio Garcia alongside Sweden's Carl Pettersson and Darren Clarke of Northern Ireland.

Padraig Harrington of Ireland was on 73 alongside Thomas Bjorn of Denmark with the fancied Luke Donald and a battling Colin Montgomerie a further stroke back.

No European has won the Masters since Jose Maria Olazabal's second green jacket triumph in 1999, the same year Paul Lawrie won the British Open, the last time a European won a Major.

It was a disappointing day for other European Ryder Cup stars.

Lee Westwood was on 75, Spain's Olazabal had a 76, Sweden's Henrik Stenson, currently second on the European Order of Merit, slumped to a 77 and Ireland's Paul McGinley had a "horrendous" 78.

Veterans Nick Faldo, a three-time former winner here, and this year's Ryder Cup captain, Ian Woosnam of Wales, found the new lengthened course too much for them as they came in with 79 and 77 respectively.

Scotland's 1987 champion Sandy Lyle was even further down the field after carding an 80.

The 30-year-old Howell, who has moved into the world top 15 for the first time in his career, traded two bogeys against two birdies on his front nine and slipped back to level par with a bogey four at Amen Corner's par-three 12th.

But birdies at the 13th and 15th got him back into the red and he expressed satisfaction with his day's work.

Donald, a recent winner in the Honda Classic which bolstered the high regard he is held in the United States, started poorly with three bogeys in the first five holes.

He grabbed his one birdie of the day at the eighth to go out in 37 and came back in the same score after bogeying the 10th.

He was not too disappointed with his position after the opening round. **APF**



VIJAY Singh drives off the 15th tee. **APF**

Singh pulls ahead with 5-under 67

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—VIJAY SINGH was at the top of the Masters leaderboard. No surprise there.

Phil Mickelson was right in the mix. That's to be expected.

Tiger Woods got off to a sluggish start at Augusta National. Sounds about right.

Still, there were plenty of surprises on Day 1. Rocco Mediate and Aaron Oberholser were Singh's closest challengers, and Ben Crenshaw—who was talking retirement a day earlier—put himself in contention with a stunning round.

Showing no regard for the longer, tougher course, Singh put up a bogey-free, 5-under 67 that gave him a one-shot lead over Mediate on Thursday. Oberholser, a Masters rookie, was another shot back.

"I played pretty decent," Singh said. "I didn't make too many mistakes. I had a lot of chances early on and I putted very well."

Mickelson shot 70, part of a group three strokes off the lead that included two-time US Open champion Retief Goosen.

Mickelson said it's much easier to play the Masters now that he's a past champion, having won in 2004 when he captured his first

major title. He added the US PGA Championship last year.

Singh and Mediate had something in common. They were the first two players to make birdies on the 11th hole, a tough test that became even harder when Augusta National decided to lengthen its course to 7,445 yards—the second-longest in major championship history behind Whistling Straits.

That's where the similarities end.

Singh is a three-time major champion who won the Masters in 2000. Mediate qualified for Augusta based on a sixth-place finish at the US Open last summer. Otherwise, he's been mired in one of the worst slumps of his career, finishing 114th on the money list a year ago—an improvement on his 176th-place showing in 2004.

Oberholser didn't have high expectations coming into his first Masters, and his attitude remained the same after he shot 69.

Woods, the defending champion, came in as an overwhelming favorite to win his fifth green jacket—only Jack Nicklaus has more—and felt good about his opening 72.

Woods finished strong with a birdie at No. 18, leaving him solidly in contention. **AP**

Tiger doing good sans his father

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—TIGER Woods was on his own at the US Masters on Thursday and did just fine battling his way to an opening round even par 72, five off the early leader Vijay Singh, at a sun-kissed Augusta Golf Club.

For the first time in 12 Masters, Woods did not have his ailing father Earl in Augusta to offer him support and guidance and on a few occasions appeared lost as he made his way around the muscled up 7,445 yard layout.

As Masters week began it was uncertain if Woods would be at the first tee on Thursday with his father back in California battling cancer.

Having jetted home on the eve of the Players' Championship to check on his father, Woods did not rule out the possibility of doing the same at the Masters if he was needed in California.

The world number one's renowned powers of concentration were put to the supreme test on Thursday, as he pushed concern for his father to the back of his mind for a few hours and focused on tackling a course stretched to the second longest in major championship history.

Despite having claimed three Masters titles in the last five years, the course and conditions were as unfamiliar to Woods as they were to the rest of the field after four years of al-

terations and rainy weather.

"I thought at the beginning of the day there might be two scores in the 60s today," said Woods, who has three wins in seven starts this season.

"We haven't played it like this for a while where it's been dry like this. Today it was quick and dry and they greens are picking up speed." Chasing a fifth US Masters, Woods moved to one under by spectacularly holing an eagle-iron from the fairway for an eagle-two at the 14th.

However, he then ran up a double-bogey seven on 15, where he found water with his approach, before finishing in style with a 35-foot birdie putt at the last.



TIGER Woods reacts to his shot on the 14th. **AP**

Taiwan wins Queen Sirikit; RP ladies share 10th place

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA—Three taiwan golfers parred the first playoff hole Friday while New Zealand had a par and two bogeys, giving the Asian team the Queen Sirikit Cup women's amateur trophy.

The New Zealand trio of Natasha Krishna, Sarah Nicholson and Sharon Ahn went into the final round with a five-shot lead at Royal Adelaide Golf Club, but finished level with Taiwan on

17-over-par 449 after 54 holes.

Krishna sunk a birdie putt to force the playoff after the teams were equal going into the 18th.

The Philippines shared 10th place with Singapore at 497.

Nicholson and Taiwan's Choi Heyong parred the first playoff hole but Ahn and Krishna both had bogeys while Yu Peilin and Hsieh Yuling had pars for Taiwan to clinch the victory.

Hui Mi-jung of South Korea won the individual competition, closing with a 67 and a 6-under total of 220. Krishna was second at 221 after a 73 Friday.

The Queen Sirikit Cup includes teams from 13 Asia-Pacific countries including 3rd placer South Korea (455), Australia (462), Thailand (467), Japan (470), China (473), Malaysia (473), India (486), Hong Kong (504) and Sri Lanka (506). **AP**



STARS FOR STARS: World No. 1 Roger Federer and US Open champion Kim Clijsters take center stage at Stars for Stars award ceremony of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour.

Hewitt lifts Australia to 2-0 lead over Belarus in Davis Cup q'final

MELBOURNE—AUSTRALIA SEIZED control of their Davis Cup quarterfinal with Belarus on Friday when Lleyton Hewitt and Chris Guccione won their opening singles matches at Kooyong in Melbourne.

Hewitt demolished Vladimir Voltchkov, 6-2, 6-1, 6-2, in just 91 minutes to give the hosts a commanding 2-0 lead after Guccione had upset

Max Mirnyi, 7-6, 3-6, 7-5, 3-6, 6-4, in a see-saw match that lasted nearly four hours.

Guccione shot to fame by winning the deciding rubber in Australia's first round win over Switzerland last month when Hewitt declared himself unavailable.

The towering left-hander proved he was no one-bit wonder with a stirring

victory over Mirnyi that featured 20 aces. "It's the biggest win of my career," he said in a televised interview.

Australia's non-playing captain John Fitzgerald said Guccione's surprise victory had given the team the perfect platform to go on and win the best-of-five tie and set up a semifinal meeting with either Croatia or Argentina.



LLEYTON Hewitt celebrates a point. **Reuters**

India, Brazil among bidders for 2016 Games

SEOUL—SIX COUNTRIES FROM four continents are already interested in bidding for the 2016 Summer Olympics, the International Olympic Committee said on Friday.

IOC chief Jacques Rogge said the candidature period for cities to bid for

these Games will open up in 2008 with a decision in 2009.

"There are six countries interested," Rogge told reporters after the end of the IOC's executive board meeting.

He said so far that India, Japan, Spain, the United States and Brazil had

expressed an interest. Italy is also considering a bid.

He said this was not a formal candidature yet but a preliminary interest by the countries.

South America has never hosted the Olympics.

India, the second largest country by population and a rapidly emerging global power, has also never won the bid to stage the Games.

The next summer Games will be held in Beijing in 2008 while London will host the Olympics in 2012. **Reuters**

Leviste, Malalad pursuing Asiad gold medal quest

THEY CAME A FEW POINTS SHORT OF BAGGING the gold in the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea.

Today, Toni Leviste of equestrian and Gretchen Malalad of karate are vying to complete their unfinished business in the quadrennial meet.

A tough field awaits them in Doha, Qatar, for the 15th edition of the Asiad later this year, but Leviste and Malalad expressed readiness to do battle in the Dec. 1-15 meet.

"I'm very committed to compete in the Asian Games, where I wanted to win the gold," said Malalad yesterday as she shared the limelight with Leviste in the SCOOP sa Kamayan session in Padre Faura in Manila. "I have some unfinished business to do."

"There definitely will be an awesome field in Doha, because unlike in Busan, Middle East countries like Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, among others, will be there," said Leviste, adding that the quarantine issue that affected the world horseracing industry had forced some of the equestrian powerhouse teams to skip the last Asiad.

The charming duo were among the few national players who brought home a medal from the Busan Asiad.

Leviste was part of the all-women equestrian squad that won the silver medal in the team competition while the 26-year-old Malalad salvaged a kumite bronze in the 60 kg class despite a dislocated shoulder.

They have earned outright berths in the Doha Asiad for their respective medal feats, including winning gold medals in the last 23rd Southeast Asian Games here.

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Editor Nestor U. Torre
Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

SATURDAY Special

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By Rito P. Asilo

"Banditas"

D: Joachim Roenning, Espen Sandberg
S: Salma Hayek, Penelope Cruz, Steve Zahn, Sam Shepard

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After their respective fathers are downed by the gun-toting Yankee and his praetorian underlings, the feisty feminine duo decides to team up—personal and class differences notwithstanding.

Then, they undergo stamina-building, confidence-boosting training under the weary, watchful eye of an Obi Wan Kenobi-like American outlaw (Sam Shepard).

The plot thickens when New York detective, Quentin (Steve Zahn), Jackson's nerdy brother-in-law (who has a knack for "C.S.I."-type forensics), joins the wacky fray to help capture the shtetzy banditas.

What Jackson doesn't count on is losing Quentin's loyalty and expertise to the beautiful renegades' noble cause—especially after the latter's sizzling 10-minute kissing romp with Sara and Maria!

With spurts of adrenaline-pumped action sequences and visual inventiveness that characterize the films of French auteur, Luc Besson (who wrote the script), the gorgeous Latino tandem of Cruz and Hayek energizes the screen with sizzle and spice.

But, the ladies' antics soon become a bore—and noisy banter. The actresses' refreshing chemistry and their directors' impressive visual style initially make the movie watchable, but its

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flawed, trite script soon pushes it down the rabbit hutch of mediocrity.

"The Hills Have Eyes"

D: Alexandre Aja
S: Dan Byrd, Vienna Shaw, Emilia De Ravin

Once again, Alexandre Aja ("High Tension") pushes the boundaries of screen violence in his reworking of Wes Craven's 1977 slasher flick, and surprisingly delivers a serviceable remake—another blood-soaked contribution to Hollywood's current "horror porn" film trend that saw Eli Roth's "Hostel" and James Wan and Darren Lynn Bousman's "Saw" movie franchise vanquish the competition at the box office recently.

When the Carrer family—dad, mom, son, two daughters, son-in-law and granddaughter—takes a detour from the usual route on their way to San Diego, they find themselves stranded in the middle of the Nevada desert.

Soon, they fall prey to a psychopathic horde of flesh-eating mutant humanoids, who have been physically deformed by the radioactive fallout that ensued during the US military's nuclear tests between 1945 to 1962. The script, though, doesn't explain the mental pathology of the nuclear meltdown's victims.

Although nothing in the film's narrative exposition is original (scary-movie clichés abound), Aja makes it work with a storytelling tactic that is characterized by fast, frenetic pacing, engaging camerawork, glossy photography, and psychological, seminal musings about man's disregard for his environment.

These elements give the production an eerie atmosphere of doom, gloom and cautionary dread. The movie raises the bar for the slasher-flick genre—but, that's not necessarily a good thing for the violence-shy moviegoer.

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ALL AGES ADMITTED
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Paris Bennett, teen survivor

By Nestor U. Torre

THIS YEAR'S "AMERICAN IDOL" HAD 16- and 17-year-olds among its 12 finalists—Kevin Covatta, Lisa Tucker and Paris Bennett. Their having survived the rigorous competition up to the finals was a tribute, not just to their singing talent, but also to their tenacity, determination and coolness under fire.

The "AI" tilt is a daunting challenge even for its much older and experienced finalists, so it must be a lot more difficult for the three teenagers. They have had to summon up extraordinary reserves of discipline, fortitude and precocious maturity to survive the extreme tension and competition.

Teen contenders

But, as the finals head for their last round, the teen contenders' best efforts have proven to be not good enough to ensure their survival.

The first teen to bite the dust was Kevin, the tilt's lovable "Chicken Little" lookalike. Despite his winning ways, Kevin fell by the wayside a couple of weeks ago.

Then, a week later, it was Lisa's turn to bid the competition goodbye. This was a big surprise, because Lisa was one of the tilt's strongest bets during its earlier rounds.

With Kevin and Lisa out of the way, that leaves only Paris still in there, doing her best to survive up to the very end. Will she turn out to be the exception that proves the "rule" that teen contestants are inherently at a disadvantage in a tough, take-no-prisoners singing competition like "American Idol"?

Paris' many fans believe that she's got what

BENNETT. Grew up
with music for
mother's milk.

it takes to go the distance. Despite her youth. Of course, naysayers beg to disagree—like juror Simon Cowell, who trenchantly observed that, when she was asked to do a sultry number, Paris looked like a kid playing dress-up in her mother's clothes and wig.

For our part, we like Paris because she is a creative performer who doesn't just change her singing style to suit a particular song, but also bothers to "totalize" an appropriate look for each number she tackles.

Finalist

Thus, she has variously come across as an ingenue, a '40s chanteuse, a Billie Holiday done, a sassy diva, a singing cheerleader, and a groovy teen! Paris is one finalist who obviously doesn't take her survival chances for granted.

Perhaps that's because she's a third-generation performer—her grandmother was one of the roasts of Tin Pan Alley during her time. Having grown up with music for mother's milk, Paris is aware of the tough work and guts required to make it in the biz, then and now.

Despite this sunny faced toughness, there's no assurance that Paris will still be standing after the "final-finals" smoke clears. Still, she's giving the competition everything she's got, despite her youth. —Paris sizzles!

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NOW SHOWING

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When the Carter family—dad, mom, son, two daughters, son-in-law and granddaughter—takes a detour from the usual route on their way to San Diego, they find themselves stranded in the middle of the Nevada desert.

Soon, they fall prey to a psychopathic horde of flesh-eating mutant humanoids, who have been physically deformed by the radioactive fallout that ensued during the US military's nuclear tests between 1945 to 1962. The script, though, doesn't explain the mental pathology of the nuclear meltdown's victims.

Although nothing in the film's narrative exposition is original (scary-movie clichés abound), Aja makes it work with a storytelling style that is characterized by fast, frenetic pacing, engaging camerawork, glossy photography, and psychological, seminal musings about man's disregard for his environment.

These elements give the production an eerie atmosphere of doom, gloom and cautionary dread. The movie raises the bar for the slasher-flick genre—but, that's not necessarily a good thing for the violence-shy moviegoer.

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Paris Bennett, teen survivor

By Nestor U. Torre

THIS YEAR'S "AMERICAN IDOL" HAD 16- and 17-year-olds among its 12 finalists—Kevin Covais, Lisa Tucker and Paris Bennett. Their having survived the rigorous competition up to the finals was a tribute, not just to their singing talent, but also to their tenacity, determination and coolness under fire.

The "AI" tilt is a daunting challenge even for its much older and experienced finalists, so it must be a lot more difficult for the three teenagers. They have had to summon up extraordinary reserves of discipline, fortitude and precocious maturity to survive the extreme tension and competition.

Teen contenders

But, as the finals head for their last round, the teen contenders' best efforts have proven to be not good enough to ensure their survival.

The first teen to bite the dust was Kevin, the tilt's lovable "Chicken Little" lookalike. Despite his winning ways, Kevin fell by the wayside a couple of weeks ago.

Then, a week later, it was Lisa's turn to bid the competition goodbye. This was a big surprise, because Lisa was one of the tilt's strongest bets during its earlier rounds.

With Kevin and Lisa out of the way, that leaves only Paris still in there, doing her best to survive up to the very end. Will she turn out to be the exception that proves the "rule" that teen contestants are inherently at a disadvantage in a tough, take-no-prisoners singing competition like "American Idol"?

Paris' many fans believe that she's got what

BENNETT. Grew up
with music for
mother's milk.

it takes to go the distance, despite her youth. Of course, naysayers beg to disagree—like juror Simon Cowell, who trenchantly observed that, when she was asked to do a sultry number, Paris looked like a kid playing dress-up in her mother's clothes and wig.

For our part, we like Paris because she is a creative performer who doesn't just change her singing style to suit a particular song, but also bothers to "totalize" an appropriate look for each number she tackles.

Finalist

Thus, she has variously come across as an ingenue, a '40s chanteuse, a Billie Holiday clone, a sassy diva, a singing cheerleader, and a groovy teen! Paris is one finalist who obviously doesn't take her survival chances for granted.

Perhaps that's because she's a third-generation performer—her grandmother was one of the toasts of Tin Pan Alley during her time. Having grown up with music for mother's milk, Paris is aware of the tough work and guts required to make it in the biz, then and now.

Despite this sunny-faced toughness, there's no assurance that Paris will still be standing after the "final-finals" smoke clears. Still, she's giving the competition everything she's got, despite her youth. —Paris sizzles!

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EWTN marks 25th year

By Nestor U. Torre

THE ETERNAL WORD TELEVISION Network (EWTN) is marking its 25th anniversary this year, and we join Catholics the world over in thanking the religious network (Channel 60 on SkyCable) for its inspiring and instructive religious programming.

We also pray that EWTN's founder, the "unsinkable" Mother Angelica, will continue to regain the full use of her faculties, so that she can eventually resume

hosting her unique talk show on the TV network that she founded a quarter of a century ago.

Determination

EWTV's success is especially inspiring because the network was launched with little money—but, with a whole lot of heart and determination to spread the Eterna Word of Jesus Christ.

Mother Angelica was so determined to keep the religious TV channel on the air that she didn't think it beneath her to "beg" for

donations from viewers to keep the station going.

Her faith in Divine Providence was ultimately rewarded with the channel's prodigious progress through the years, all the way up to the present (it now enjoys a viewership of 80 million worldwide)

Mother Angelica has been sidelined by illness and no longer runs EWTN, but the TV station continues to spread God's word with the help of new visionaries who have stepped into the breach. Thus, again, is a clear sign of Divine Providence at work.

Aside from doing its work admirably well, EWTN also serves as a shining example for other prospective Catholic broadcasters to similarly launch religious radio-TV stations to serve the spiritual needs of the people in their respective regions.

Technology

All too often, clergy and lay leaders balk at using the media to disseminate God's word because they aren't familiar with the technology, and broadcasting can be expensive.

Well, when she started EWTN, Mother Angelica was also "poor" and tech-leery, but she was able to overcome those handicaps with God's help and the strength



MOTHER ANGELICA.
"Unsinkable" founder.

of her spiritual convictions—and look where EWTN is now!

Let's hope that clergy and lay leaders in the Philippines are heartened by EWTN's triumph over adversity, and launch their own media initiatives.

Colleagues

We trust, too, that Mother Angelica will eventually rejoin her colleagues at EWTN. She was miraculously healed once before—and it can happen again.

Meanwhile, EWTN at 25 years "young" continues to do God's work on TV—and the world is a better place due to its inspired and inspiring ministrations.

If you believe that a religious dimension is important in the lives of men, why don't you tune in to SkyCable Channel 60, and savor the spiritual riches of the programs that EWTN has to offer?

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5

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Documentary tackles Beatles' contentious breakup

By Nestor U. Torre

EVEN YOUNGER MUSIC buffs are fans of the Beatles. Like their parents—and grandparents—they marvel at how the '60s group's memorable songs have remained fresh and vital to this day. Thus, they rue the group's demise, and wonder how and why it happened.

All sorts of theories have been advanced to answer this baffling question. Many versions focus on the "Yoko Ono factor," blaming the Japanese visual and performance artist for "poisoning" John Lennon's mind against the other Beatles.

Result

But, a recent TV documentary indicates that the group's breakup was the result of a more complex skein of factors.

From the very start of the Beatles' spectacular musical career, the relationship between John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr was characterized by a volatile but productive creative rivalry.

More specifically, John and Paul were engaged in a constant "friendly battle" to see who could come up with the best original songs.

Although John held the preeminent position in the group, Paul kept pushing him due to his exceptionally productive output when it came to coming up with original songs.

In the long run, this potential source of conflict benefited the group, because it pressured John to be similarly productive as a composer.

Fueled by the great new songs penned by John and Paul, the Beatles



THE BEATLES. Creative rivalry that turned into a destructive force.

surged to the top of the pop and rock scene, exciting millions throughout the world with their songs' memorable tunes and lyrics.

Indeed, the Beatles' songs eventually defined their generation—and decades afterwards, continue to delight music lovers belonging to different generations.

So, why did the Beatles' amazing upward trajectory eventually self-destruct? Their creative rivalry turned into a destructive force when their manager, Brian Epstein, died.

Power vacuum

A power vacuum opened up, and John and Paul had different ideas for filling it. John wanted Alan Klein to step into Brian's shoes, but Paul pushed the group to hire his father-in-law. John won that battle, but it divided the group.

In addition, Brian's death pushed John into a deep depression that caused him to stop being the group's leader. Paul stepped into the breach to keep the group together, but George and Ringo periodically got ticked off with the new arrangement.

The next bone of contention was that infamous "Yoko Ono factor," which caused John to turn even more

inward and to further distance himself from the group.

The rift became even more pronounced when Sir Lew Grade made an offer to purchase the Beatles' publishing empire. Reports have it that Paul secretly bought more shares in the group's holding company, and John was incensed when he found out about this underhanded move.

Official announcement

Paul then announced that he would no longer perform as a Beatle, and John got even angrier because it was his decision to break up the group, so he wanted to be the one to make the official announcement regarding this momentous move.

The case reached the courts, where all of the Beatles' "dirt" came out, further souring its members' interrelationships.

Then, in 1980, John was shot dead. This radically changed the situation because "it instantly turned John into an angel, and Paul into a devil."

The impression was created that Paul was "second-rate" compared to John—and Paul "had to fight with John's ghost for his rightful place."

These days, Paul has reasserted himself as an exceptional musical artist in his own right. As for the

Beatles' legacy, the documentary concludes with the observation that both John and Paul have become musical icons whose songs have transcended the teapot tempests of the past. —Beatles forever!

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Ciara Sotto

waxes her mom's favorites

By Remy M. Umerez

AT FIRST SPIN, ONE WOULD THINK that "The Way of Love," Ciara Sotto's latest album, is nothing but a collection of revivals and old love songs. They include: "The Way of Love," "Aldila," "All I See is You," "Climb Every Mountain," "Moon River," "All the Things You Are," "You Don't Own Me" and "Where is Tomorrow?"

Special meaning

According to Ciara, however, these are special tunes because they were the songs her mom, Helen Gamboa, sang to her when she was a child. "I knew they were very special to her, because she hummed them all the time. Some of them have a very personal meaning to her. They are still her favorites," she says.

Ciara is partial to songs written in the '50s because of their romantic tone and touching lyrics. "Their melodies are simple and measured, unlike today's songs, kung saan anything goes na lang. I want to introduce these tunes to the younger generation, particularly the music of Henry Mancini."

She also hopes to record "Climb Every Mountain" with her mom soon.

Divas

Sotto takes singing very seriously. She is now on her sixth year at the UST Conservatory of Music. She wants to become a singing diva in the mold of Cecilia Bartoli, or the late Maria Callas!

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'Caught in the Act' brims with vigor

By Noelani Torre

IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHY MICHAEL BUBLÉ has become so popular after only a few years in the scene, listen to his live album, "Caught in the Act." Featuring portions from a PBS special and from his concert at Los Angeles' Wilshire Theater, the album will make you understand why Bublé has such a wide crossover appeal.

The guy's a complete showman. You'll have to watch the DVD to appreciate this—the CD contains only eight songs—as it is both a visual and aural experience. When you see him swagger down the stage in the opening number (Nina Simone's very appropriate "Feeling Good"), you'll see just how the twentysomething Canadian has become so comfortable in his role as suave crooner.

Charismatic

Confident and charismatic, he charms the crowd almost effortlessly—and it's obvious most of them are eager to be charmed.

When you come to think of it, however, Bublé isn't really that unique. He's certainly not the first singer to get his material from jazz standards and the classics, and though his versions are good, they're not particularly brilliant.

Where he excels is in putting up a good show. Not only does he have the talent for invoking the ghost of Frank Sinatra, he's also adept at the difficult art of crowd-pleasing. And indeed, you'd be hard-pressed to find a more pleased crowd than the one caught on video in "Caught in the Act."

Sincere

Neatly gliding from smooth vocals to equally smooth patter, he holds the audience in the palm of his hand! Some might find his rhapsodizing over his love for being able to "continue the legacy" to be put-on, but he—and this is one of his gifts—appears to be completely sincere.

The show is livened up even more by the presence of several guest performers—Italian diva Laura Pausini sings "You'll Never Find



BUBLÉ. Complete showman!

CARICATURE BY ANSTAB

Another Love Like Mine" with Bublé; popular trumpeter, Chris Botti, makes an appearance in "Song for You," and Josh Groban pops in for a comic number.

The flavor of the collection is that of youth, energy, and good, clean fun. The arrangements have been injected with a good deal of energy—take a particularly fizzy reworking of "Summer Wind" on the audio disc, for example.

The playlist will be familiar to Bublé's fans, ranging from golden ditties like "I've Got You Under My Skin" and "Save the Last Dance for Me" to unexpected covers like the Beatles' "Can't Buy Me Love," Van Morrison's "Moon-dance," and Freddie Mercury's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love."

Quiet ballad

One of the most outstanding tracks is an original, however—"Home," which he co-wrote with Amy Foster-Gilles and Alan Chang, is a quiet ballad that resonates with feeling.

Finally, Bublé has a voice you can cuddle up with, but it's not enough in itself to blow you away. The excellent big band takes care of that. First-rate and brimming with vigor, they catapult the singer from being merely good to exceptional!

Mel, Julia face new thespic challenges

By Rito P. Asilo

FROM MARCIA ZOBRADO: "Where is Mel Gibson? I hope he doesn't stay behind the cameras too long. What projects are lined up too Meg Ryan, Antonio Banderas and Julia Roberts?"

SHOW BIZ Q&A

Rito P. Asilo

language feature, "Apocalypse" (set 600 years ago), about a young man who escapes from being sacrificed to the gods in the ancient Mayan kingdom. Watch out for Gibson's surprise cameo in the film's trailer.

TV series

Not content with his success on the big screen, Mel also directed some episodes of the family comedy TV series, "Complete Savages," shown locally on ETC. He will be seen next in Richard Donner's "Sam and George," about two friends who are reunited after one of them (Gibson) is released from jail—20 years after he's wrongfully convicted!

For her part, Julia Roberts is busy playing to SRO audiences in the Broadway hit, "Three Days of Rain," which scored an astounding \$7-million in advance ticket sales—in one day alone! In fact, she is winning critical praise—even when she breaks out of character!

Julia was so popular with New York's theatergoers that, on opening night, her first few lines were inaudible over the audience's thunderous applause!

The New York Daily News reported, "Midway through the second act, Roberts had to contend with a runaway prop tomato: A plastic veggie landed on the floor, bounced and echoed like a table tennis ball—a bloop that left the actress briefly in stitches. She broke character and couldn't help flashing her trademark toothy grin."

Rebels

Roberts' latest screen project is another Mike Nichols ("Closer") film, "Charlie Wilson's War," about a Texas congressman



ROBERTS AND GIBSON. No rest for the talented!

(played by Tom Hanks) who assisted Afghan rebels in their war against Russia.

On the other hand, after experimenting with Jane Campion's art-house flick, "In the Cut," where she shed her "American Sweetheart" image (along with her clothes), Meg Ryan appeared in the disappointing 2004 boxing drama, "Against the Ropes."

Both films were artistic experiments that fared poorly at the tills. To regain lost ground, Ryan is currently writing a script for a film tentatively titled "Somewhere in Time," a romantic drama that teams her anew with her "Sleepless in Seattle" co-star, Tom Hanks.

Meg has just finished filming Jon Kasdan's "In the Land of Women," about a heartbroken TV writer (Adam Brody of "The O.C.") who relocates to Detroit to take care of his grandmother. Along the way, he touches the lives of women, one of them played by Ryan, who live across the street.

Professional dancer

Like Mel, Julia and Meg, Antonio Banderas is no stranger to challenging film roles. He will be seen next in Liz Friedlander's "Take the Lead," about a former professional dancer (Banderas) who volunteers to teach dance in a public school in New York. The production also features William actor Dante Basco ("The Debut").

Banderas' other projects: "Shrek 3"; "Bordertown," a crime drama with Jennifer Lopez, and "Puss-in-Boots," the anticipated movie spin-off of his popular "Shrek 2" character.

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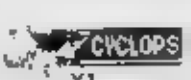
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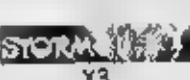
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Chills and thrills at the movies

By Nestor U. Torre

WHY DO MOVIEGOERS PAY good money to watch a film that will scare them out of their wits? Because there's a cathartic point to all those thrills and chills, and the resulting relief and release from fear and tension are worth their weight in popcorn!

For instance, the new suspense thriller, "When A Stranger Calls," engages the added empathy of teen viewers, because it shows what happens when a 16-year-old babysitter has to save herself and the children placed in her care from an evil interloper.

Fierce fighter

In the process, she goes from happy-go-lucky teen to traumatized but fierce fighter. The young protagonist is played by Camilla Belle.

From Wolfgang Petersen comes the thrilling action adventure, "Poseidon," starring Kurt



LUCAS. Leads cast of Wolfgang Petersen's adventure film.

Russell, Josh Lucas and Richard Dreyfuss.

It's New Year's Eve and festivities have begun aboard the luxury cruise ship Poseidon. But, on the bridge, the chief officer senses that something is wrong. Scanning the horizon, he sees it—a

rogue wave, a monstrous wall of water over 100 feet high, bearing down on the ship with tremendous speed.

The wave strikes with colossal force, rolling the ship completely upside down! In the assault's aftermath, a few hundred survivors are left in the sullied Main Ballroom. What can they do to escape and survive?

Friendship

In "Eight Below" chills of a more literal sort come to the fore, with the film's exciting tale about loyalty and the bonds of friendship set in the extreme wilderness of Antarctica.

In the film, three members of a scientific expedition are forced to leave their team of beloved sled dogs behind due to a sudden accident and perilous weather condition.

During the harsh Arctic winter, the dogs must struggle for survival in the frozen wilderness for

six long months, until the adventurers can mount a rescue mission. Frank Marshall directs a cast led by Paul Walker, Bruce Greenwood and Jason Biggs.

Finally, Emma Roberts and Jojo Levesque play best friends in the fish-out-of-water fantasy, "Aquamarine."

Mermaid

In the movie, their characters chance upon a mermaid named Aquamarine in a swimming pool after a violent storm has washed her up from the sea nearby.

When Aqua sets her sights on a lifeguard and asks the two girls for help to win his heart, they

But, when Aqua promises to grant them anything they wish for, the girls agree with alacrity—because, unless something magical happens, one of them has to move away, and life will never be the same again for the two best friends!

Summer thoughts

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark



tected by the Supreme Lord.

At summertime, we find soothing pleasure in the cool waters of a pool or the ocean. This is equivalent to finding happiness in spiritual activities.

Vacation means living life and having fun. We can have these in the spiritual dimension, and they don't require money. All it takes is submission and surrender to the Supreme Enjoyer.

The best vacation spot is not that far. In your heart rests the Supreme Beloved, who is the source of all beautiful and restful places. He is the ultimate refuge of the weary soul!

SOME PEOPLE SEE SUMMER as a time to just cruise and let the days pass in idleness. But, time is precious, and summer vacations should be spent to achieve progress and personal development.

Wise men know how quickly time flies, so they utilize every moment to achieve their goals in life. Self-realization and inner happiness.

Here are things to think about this summer—

Connection

We can take a vacation anytime by establishing a loving connection with our Supreme Father through meditation and prayer as a respite from the miseries of the material world. We should place our lives in His hands.

A real vacation means taking time out from our roles as director, manager and protector. Instead, we accept being directed and pro-

'Mr. & Ms.' celebrates 30th year

THIS MONTH, "MR. & MS." magazine celebrates its 30th anniversary with popular stars, Dennis Trillo and Angel Locsin, on the cover.

Other interesting articles: "Pearl of the Orient," "Divination: The A-Z of Predicting Your Life," "Spirituality and the Filipino People," "Luck in Your Own Garden," "Manny Pacquiao: Pinoy Idol," "Of Miracles, Magic and the Paranormal," "Spiritual Emergencies at Mid-Life," "Fantasy Comes to TV Life," "The Filipino Techie," "A Triumph of the Filipino Spirit," "Man or Elemental: Who is Higher in Evolution?" "Text Me!" "Wrestling Mama," "Family Ties," "Deep Nerve

Therapy," "Reflex Your Way to Health and Beauty," "Bora Bora-cay," "The Hopeful Pinoy," and "Portraits of Outstanding Filipinas."

MONTAGE 'Eight Below'

Sneak previews of the new film, "Eight Below," will be held on April 10 and 11 at selected theaters. Inspired by a true story, "Eight Below" tells the exciting and inspiring tale of the courage and friendship that enable four adventurers and their beloved sled dogs to cope with the extreme dangers of Antarctica.

'Shopping Spree' promo
Colgate Fresh Confidence with Cooling Crystals recently

launched its "P1 M Makeover Shopping Spree" promo with a glittering show at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City, featuring Jay-R, Sharna Magdayao and VJ Mariel Rodriguez.

The promo gives 10 lucky winners P100,000 each to shop at Makati malls on May 13.

To join, write your name, address, contact number and signature on a carton of Colgate Fresh Confidence's Spicy Fresh or Peppermint Ice variants, and drop your entry at LBC Branches nationwide. Deadline is April 17.

On April 21, two winners each will be selected from Metro Manila, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

'Harry Potter' on video

Retailers in the States report record-breaking first-day sales of five million units of "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" on DVD. In the Philippines, the film's fully-loaded two-disc DVD is also doing well. It includes conversations with the cast, interactive challenges, making-of features and never-before-seen footage.

'Go, Diego, Go!'

Starting April 14 on the Nickelodeon Channel, say "Hola!" to Diego, the bilingual animal rescuer and nature expert who talks to animals in the new show, "Go, Diego, Go!" Each episode introduces preschoolers to scientific and investigative thinking. Also telecast on April 14 is



"THE GOBLET OF FIRE." Two-disc DVD includes never-before-seen footage.

"Danny Phantom Special—The Ultimate Enemy."

Kamikaze

The Kamikaze band stages a free show at SM Bacoor at 5 p.m. today. Autograph-signing follows the showcase.

Secret Bible Week

For its initial episode, the National Geographic Channel's Secret Bible Week will premiere "The Gospel of Judas" at 10 p.m.

on April 9. The two-hour special tells the incredible story of what has happened to the document since it was found, recent authentication process and analysis, and key insights from its translation and interpretation.

Bond films on Star Movies

At 9 p.m. today, the Star Movies Channel screens the James Bond films, "Octopussy" and "On Her Majesty's Secret Service," back-to-back.

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Senior stars live it up

By Nestor U. Torre

IF 40 IS THE NEW 30, THAT'S LIKE GIVING show biz's senior stars a new lease on life—and they're taking full advantage of that "extra" decade by initiating projects that were deemed improbable only a few years ago!

Take Barbra Streisand. Only some seasons ago, she bade farewell to live performance, preferring to leave her fans with enduring memories of her singing talent at its prime.

Tour

Well, don't look now, but Barbra's back with another performing tour (her last-last?) Seems like she feels 50, not 60, so let the good times roll—again!

To whip up excitement over her latest performing gambit, Barbra has acknowledged some sultry secrets in her sexy closet. For one thing, she's revealed romantic liaisons with the mucho macho likes of Don Johnson.

Yes, despite the fact that some people thought she was "ugly" when she was young, Barbra later succeeded in "thunking" herself beautiful—lovely enough to be desired by some of Tinseltown's most desirable male stars.

That, plus her drop-dead talent, has made her a turn-on even for men who can have their pick of the world's most beautiful women.

Roving eyes

These days, however, Barbra's roving eyes have rested on her "for life" beau, James Brown, and her personal dating service is permanently closed.

For her part, Sharon Stone is 48 years old, but that's only 38 in the "new chronology," so watch her sizzle! Her latest showcase is the sequel to "Basic Instinct," which ups the ante for screen eroticism so much that some more conservative viewers are howling mad.



STREISAND. Has acknowledged some sultry secrets in her sexy closet.

But, Sharon knows what she wants, and what's best for her, at this mature stage of her smoking life, so sticks and stones may break her bones, but words will never dissuade her from daring and baring!

Enduring beauty

Aside from her enduring beauty and sexiness, what Sharon has going for her is her intelligence. The combination of brains and sexiness is a heady mix for many people, so the "neothirtysomething" star is experiencing a Second Spring in her professional and personal life.

Finally, Joan Collins is facing the TV cameras anew for a CBS special on the reunion of the stars of the hit soap opera, "Dynasty." Looking none the worse for wear (and tear), Collins is serving notice that she's still the quintessential TV villainess for all sinister reasons and seasons.

She does admit that physical violence has become more tiring (not to mention tiresome) for her to execute, so she's opting for less extreme physicality this time around.

The spirit may still be willing, but being so archly wicked all the time can be a strain on those famous eyebrows!

Stellar shapes and curves through the years

By Behn Cervantes

I WAS INTRODUCED to stellar curves in the persons of Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth. Betty was known for her million-dollar legs. Her gams were so beautiful that Lloyd's of London insured her shapely legs for a million megabucks. And remember, this was in the 40s.



HEPBURN. Was dressed by the world's most important couturiers.

Sight to behold

Rita's shape in a flimsy negligee was a sight to behold. Another famous pair of legs belonged to Marlene Dietrich, the German sex bomb who immortalized "Lili Marlene," a song so poignant it caused many German soldiers to wonder why they were involved in a senseless world war! The song was considered seditious to the Nazi cause by Adolf Hitler, no less.

Hollywood physiognomy was the silhouette of the pretty and curvaceous chorines who were staple fare in movie musicals. They were uniformly tall, shapely and blonde—the idealized version of the girl-next-door.

Jane Russell was so buxom that Howard Hughes, who discovered her, instructed his engineering staff to construct the proper brassiere for the actress' ample boobs!

Notion

Hollywood's notion of the sexy shape has changed through the decades.

By the '50s, the "ideal" Hollywood shape became even more pronounced as Marilyn Monroe and her whistle-bait jk made the slopes between bosom, waist and hips even more accentuated. By then, the sex bombs were 36-22-36, as

epitomized by the likes of Monroe, Janet Leigh, Ava Gardner and Elizabeth Taylor.

Mitzi Gaynor, Jan Sterling and Gina Lollobrigida were sexy dolls whose shapes dominated the colorful Cinemascope screens.

Sophia Loren was a modern Aphrodite in the flesh!

Then, Grace Kelly and Audrey Hepburn came and conquered Hollywood.

The stylish duo provided the movie screen with an entirely different silhouette. By Tinseltown's standards, they were skinny and flat-chested. However, they were distinctively beautiful—and were dressed by the world's most important couturiers.

Appreciation

When and how does the world's appreciation for shape change?

Hollywood and the MTV generation now glorify the androgynous shapes of Madonna, Janet Jackson and their muscled lot. The bosoms are not as ample, the waists are flat but rather wide, the hips are almost gone, and they are proud to show off their abs.

Current Hollywood A-listers Julia Roberts and Charlize Theron are good actresses with great charisma, but they don't have the Hollywood shape of yesteryears. No wonder, sexy Angelina Jolie captures the imagination of the world. She has singularly brought back the '50s silhouette—although she also sports some tattoos. Neither Monroe, Gardner nor Taylor would have allowed a tattoo to mar their perfectly-maintained bodies. Yes, times, tastes and shapes have changed, indeed!

Roselle Nava is out to regain lost ground

By Jocelyn Valle

IN 2001, ROSELLE NAVA had to take time off from a thriving career as a recording star, TV host and movie actress to recuperate from a throat that had been damaged by improper use.

Roselle got a vocal coach to teach her new techniques. She also observed a healthier diet. Soon, she was back in fighting form, but by then, the performing field had become crowded with singing champions who enjoyed the backing of media giants.

Opportunity

Feeling discouraged but refusing to give up, the "Ang TV" alumna grabbed at whatever opportunity came her way, and challenged herself to perform better each time. For an extra boost of confidence, she began going to the gym and, to remind everyone that she's all grown up, she joined the cast of the stage production, "Pen's Talks."

"Yes," she admits, "the stint helped me shed my inhibitions onstage." Indeed, in her birthday concert at Baguio last month,



NAVA. Preparing to record her seventh album.

Roselle's opening salvo (of Miami Sound Machine hits) had her wearing an outfit that showed off her fab abs. She also displayed her terpsichorean skills in a medley of dance tunes by the likes of Beyoncé and Jennifer Lopez.

"I guess I've matured," she smiles. Though she has a marketing management degree from De La Salle, Roselle has never worked in an office. She

shares, "My heart is really into music. I enjoy sharing my talent more now."

She recently wrapped up a bar tour for Sketchers, and is about to start another one with Jinky Vidal.

Most applauded

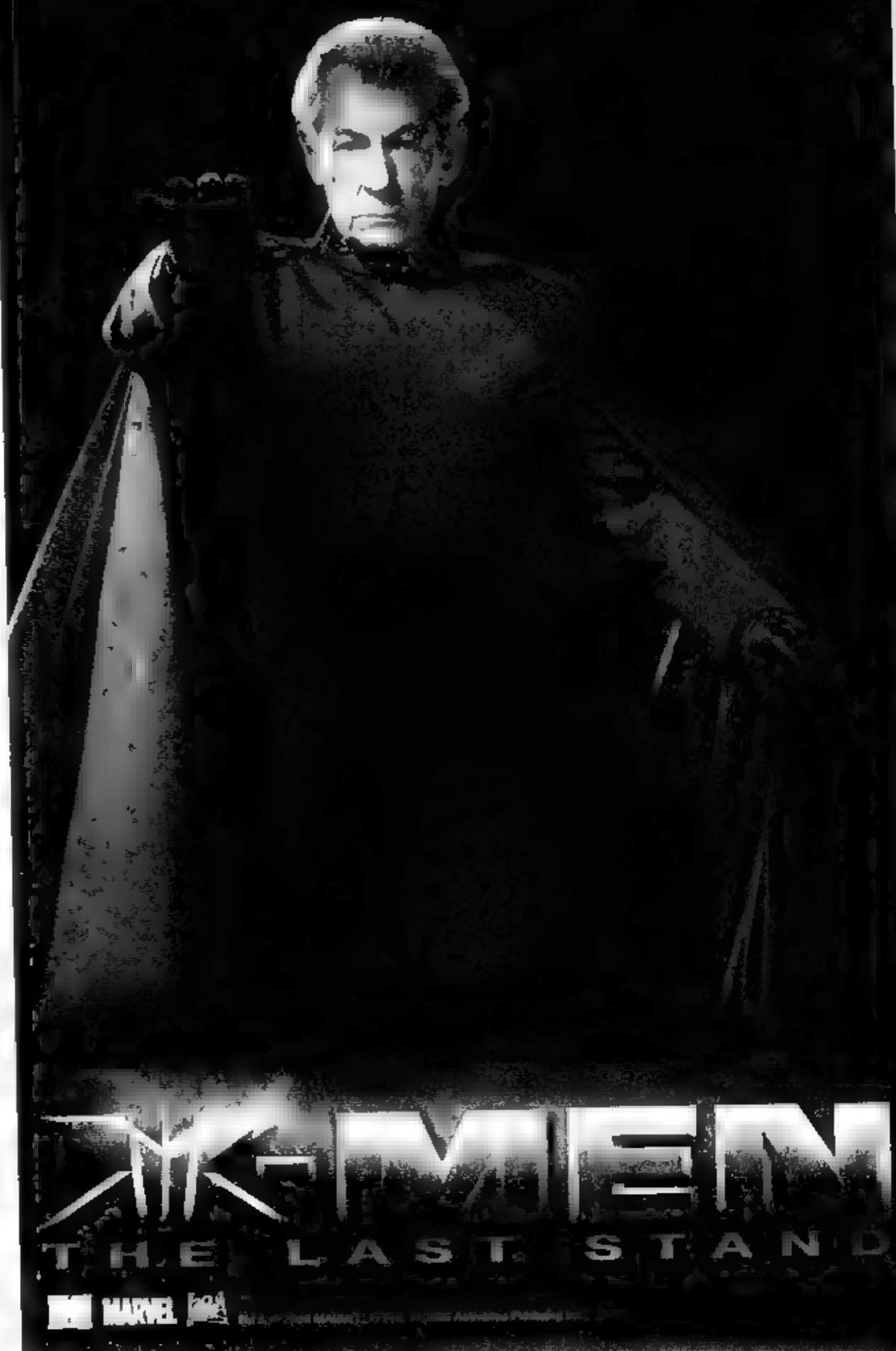
"I'm also collecting materials for my seventh album," she relates. "But, I'll stick to singing pop music. The most applauded numbers in my gigs are my hits, 'Dahil Mahal na Mahal' and 'You,' so I've realized that I'm most effective in this type of songs. And I like it that way."

"I hope that I still have a place in show business," she beams. "It's difficult to regain lost ground, but I'm having fun proving that I can do it!"

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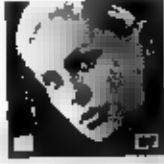
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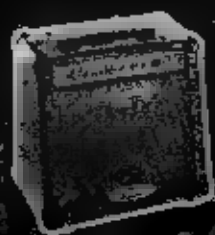


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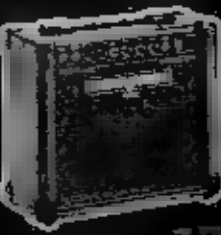
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SATURDAY Special

P.O.D. returns with vibrant blend of rock, hip-hop and reggae

By Noelani Torre

HERE'S A GIVE-AWAY trivia question: How many rap-metal bands love Jesus and aren't shy singing and rapping about it?

There's only one right answer, because there's only one band like that out there—the hard-rocking four-some from San Diego who call themselves P.O.D.

They may have tattoos, dreadlocks, baggy jeans, and a name that spells out as Payable on Death, but they're the only ones in their genre tackling themes that your usual I-had-a-bad-childhood-so-it's-not-my-fault-I'm-like-this rap metalist wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole.

Relief

Plus, raucous though they sound, they're clean-mouthed. No dirty, women-degrading expletives from this crew—and you don't know how big a relief that is for female listeners (yes, they exist).

In fact, P.O.D.'s latest release, "Testify," is practically the only CD on display in the rock section that doesn't have a "Parental Advisory Explicit Content" tag.

Lest you be misled by all of this, however, these guys are not a bunch of preachy goodie-goodies. They don't force their faith down their listeners'



"TESTIFY." Raucous but clean-mouthed.

throats, and you may not even notice the Biblical allusions if you weren't primed for them.

With their not-so-ordinary blending of rock, hip-hop and reggae, P.O.D.—Iraa, Sonny, Wuv, and Jason Truby—first caught the public's attention with their major label debut, "The Fundamental Elements of Southtown," in '99.

The album went platinum, and the band followed up on that success with contributions to the soundtracks of films like "Any Given Sunday," "Little Nicky," and "Ready to Rumble."

Momentum

Their 2001 album, "Satellite," was also a success, though their momentum slowed down somewhat when original guitarist Marcos decided to quit. After

replacing him with Truby, they released "Payable on Death" in 2003.

"Testify" features the same lineup, with the famed Glen Ballard (Alanis Morissette, Dave Matthews Band) helming the production. With a 50-minute playtime, the CD has 13 songs, some of which feature guest artists Matisyahu and Boo Yaa T.R.I.B.E.

The album opens with the vibrant, reggae-flavored "Roots in Stereo," featuring the very talented Hasidic MC Matisyahu. A rocking and unexpectedly funky number with a big chorus, it's an effective opener and the harbinger of more good things to come.

Innovation

Unfortunately, despite the presence of other solid numbers like "Lights Out," "Sounds Like War," and "On the Grind," the rest of the songs seem to blend into one another. They have a tendency to sound alike—and if you're a rap-metal band and this is your fifth album, a little more innovation is always a good thing.

Rap-metal's youthful audience is also maturing, and looking for more in their music. Listening to "Testify," you get the feeling that P.O.D. hasn't quite kept up yet with their audience. Some of their songs' lyrics remain on the adolescent level, as well.

Still, there are glimpses of a brighter future in this album. Let's hope they follow through!



P.O.D. The boys love Jesus—and aren't shy singing about it!

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Placing the 'star system' in the proper context

By Nestor U. Torre

OUR RECENT PIECE on the decline of the star system has elicited reactions from a number of film buffs.

While some of them agree that stars became too powerful and upstaged other key members of the production team, others felt that "star value" should remain an important part of the moviegoing experience.

Viewers

It is recalled that, when movies were first shot and screened, the actors were unidentified. After only a few films, however, viewers started asking who they were, and their names were belatedly revealed.

From then on, it was only a matter of months before the actors became the world's first movie stars, with loyal fans who patronized all of the films they appeared in—and the "star system" was "inadvertently" born!

Stars help make movies accessible and interesting to viewers, and they promote empathy in a major way.

Synergy

Viewers readily identify with a charismatic star's performance, and complete screen synergy is achieved.

So, let's not debunk stardom, and

instead find ways to keep its powers within the context of the entire filmmaking system.

This includes placing reasonable limits on stellar talent fees. It was only in the 1960s that Elizabeth Taylor set

a record in terms of what she was paid for playing the title role in "Cleopatra" (\$1 million).

Today, quite a number of superstars rate the top fee of \$20-M per film, with a few super-duper luminaries getting

even more than that. They break the bank by getting paid, not just for acting, but also for executive-producing their starers.

They can make even more by foregoing their hefty talent fees in favor of "pro-

ducing profit percentage points" that are paid to them once their latest film starts making money. If the movie is a blockbuster, its top star could end up making \$50 million.

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Mickey Rooney's stardom defies time

By Behn Cervantes

MICKEY ROONEY IS ONE OF Hollywood's most enduring stars. This Brooklyn-born ball

of fire can sing, dance, act, and play six musical instruments.

The pint-sized talent was born Joe Yu. a Jr. 86 years ago. His career spans from the silent-film era and Hollywood's Golden Years to today. "I've had it all," Rooney rightfully stated.

considered one of the most outstanding acting feats by an adolescent.

Series

He gained a permanent foothold in show business when he successfully developed the character of Andy Hardy in a series that teamed him up with another talented dynamo, Judy Garland.

Like Judy, Mickey gained critical praise for his numerous portrayals, like the disturbed teenager in "Boys' Town," where he pitted his dramatic prowess against Spencer Tracy, no less. Tracy later described Rooney as "an awfully talented kid."

A recipient of a special Oscar, Mickey wrote extensively about his career's ups and downs—and his marriages.

Entertainer

Being an ebullient young fellow, Mickey often lived the fast life. He married the glorious Ava Gardner when she was only 17, and remarried seven more times in his search for marital bliss.

When asked when he would retire, Rooney stated: "Never! I'll sing, dance and act for as long as the public welcomes me!"

Peak

He has also starred with—and married—some of Tinseltown's most beautiful actresses. He reached the peak of his career when he was just a teenager.

He has continued to appear in films long after his reign as Hollywood's *Numero Uno* box-office star ended.

Rooney made his first stage appearance when he was only 15 months old! By the age of six, he was performing alongside his parents in vaudeville. The talented tyke was quickly noticed by Hollywood talent scouts. He was tapped to portray Mickey McGuire, the popular comic character, on a profitable series that made him a star to reckon with.

MGM loaned him to Warner Bros. to portray Puck in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer's Night's Dream," and his performance was

Because it's there

By Nestor U. Torre

RECENT REPORTS THAT A TEAM OF Filipino mountain climbers is preparing to scale up to the peak of the world's tallest mountain, Mt. Everest, has amused local film buffs because it calls to mind the '90s film about a group of spirited dreamers from the Caribbean who had the gumption to join the Winter Olympics.

Like the first Pinoy Everest climbing expedition, that film was an unexpected event because there's no snow in the Caribbean, so how could a team from that region even hope to do well in the Winter Olympics? And yet, that's exactly how it fared.

Snow

We hope, of course, that things will turn out as well for "our" Everest team, even if the only snow to be found in the Philippines is in a glass of *halo-halo*.

Even as we wish the team the best, however, we look up our book on Everest and note with some trepidation that Broughton Coburn's tome is titled "Everest—Mountain Without Mercy."

Sledding for fun and medals at the Winter Olympics is one thing, but the Everest challenge is obviously quite another. We trust that our team is fully aware of this, and has done everything to make the daunting challenge a reality without risking life, limbs—and lungs!

These facts should help put the imminent Pinoy "assault" on Everest's summit in clarifying perspective.

It was only half a century ago that Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first climbers to stand at the peak of Mt. Everest, with literally the rest of the world spread out beneath them.

Stunning feat

Since then, hundreds of other mountain climbers have attempted to duplicate their stunning feat, but the challenge is so daunting and dangerous that more than 150 challengers have perished.

Fact is, life is constantly threatened by death in Everest's hostile, high-altitude and bone-chilling environment, where no human can survive for long.

The most tragic event in the mountain's history, in 1966, claimed eight lives, including two of the world's top climbing expedition leaders. The fatal factor was a deadly blizzard, from which there proved to be no escape.

But, Everest is also the story of triumph of man against the worst that nature has to throw at him, and we trust that this will be the theme of the imminent Filipino ascent to the summit of the world's tallest peak.

Veteran climbers point out that, if everything goes right, Everest is very "climbable." But, if anything goes wrong (and mistakes can be made easily and quickly by even the best climbers), people can perish.

Virtually impossible

Experts say that it's virtually impossible for guides to save anyone above the South Col, a place where every climber must be self-reliant. After Camp IV, they add, the time for "coaching" from the guides is over.

We trust that our climbers have taken these and other caveats into consideration, and have prepared themselves to handle any eventualities. And so, the Pinoy team sets off to conquer the world's tallest mountain—because it's there!

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Toni Gonzaga

Hong Kong Date

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Piolo Pascual

Manila Date

- Overnight stay at Makati Shangri-La Hotel
- Lunch at the hotel
- Bowling at Powerbowl
- Badminton
- Make-over worth P2,000
- Romantic dinner aboard a yacht
- Cocktails at hotel
- P10,000 cash prize



Say Alonzo



John Pratts

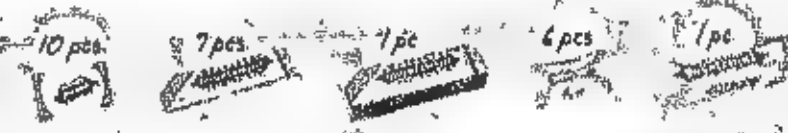
Manila date with Say Alonzo and John Pratts is scheduled on April 8, 2006 instead of April 1, as approved by DOH-BFAD.

Raffle Draw	Draw Date	Deadline of Entries (End of office hours of)	No. of Winners
3rd Draw	April 17, 2006	April 10, 2006	Two (2) Winners

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For DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0136 Series of 2006

Placing...

From page A4.3

All this is great for the star, but could wreak havoc on a film's budget, with lesser actors and members of the production team getting a relative pittance, because the bulk of the budget has gone to attracting the top star to grace the production with his stellar clout.

Budget

To make sure that this unjust situation can no longer happen, percentage limits may be set for stellar fees, up to a maximum of 30 percent of a production's total budget.

Stars should also inhibit themselves from taking unfair advantage of their box-office clout and ordering other members of the production team around to suit their whims and caprices.

They should keep reminding themselves that they aren't scriptwriters, directors, cinematographers and editors, and expend their energies on coming up with superlative performances, period.

If they can make these important adjustments, stars can remain an important and integral part of the filmmaking process, while giving their co-workers enough leeway—and respect—so they can do their work with similar enthusiasm and creativity.

MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS
bago ang **April 17** deadline.
5 DAYS TO GO

BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

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From Pagudpud to Sorsogon
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XTRA

Actual test result on a 1999 Chevrolet, as certified over by Automobile Association of the Philippines and Car Awards Group, Inc.

Emotional changing of the guard at Ayala



JAIME Zobel de Ayala gives his eldest son, incoming Ayala Corp. chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, a hug at the end of the company's shareholders' meeting Friday at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila.

Don Jaime turns over control to eldest son, Jaza

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AN EMOTIONAL CHANGING OF THE GUARD MARKED THIS year's annual stockholders' meeting of Ayala Corp., the Philippines' oldest and fourth biggest conglomerate in terms of revenues.

Jaime Zobel de Ayala, 71, formally announced before stockholders his retirement from the multibillion-peso company he has helped build in the last 49 years.

Zobel, among Forbes magazine's richest man with assets of \$1.3 billion, was applauded twice, the first for almost half a minute after his brief speech, and the second, which drew a standing ovation, after a film clip showcased his achievements in the company.

"As a 172-year-old company, Ayala continues to grow, and will continue to be dynamic and ever faithful to its traditional values and principles, ever conscious of its role in economic development, and its obligation to con-

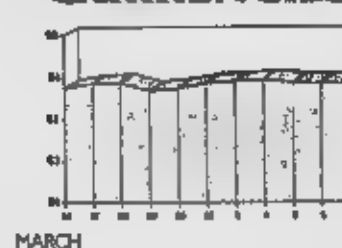
tribute to the betterment of the quality of life for the Filipino," Zobel said in his speech.

"I am presiding over Ayala's annual general meeting for the 23rd and last time. As I look back on all these years, I reminisce about the decisions I had to make at crucial times. No doubt, I have had my share of triumphs and disappointments but, on the balance, the overall experience has been gratifying and rewarding. It has been an immensely fulfilling professional life," Zobel said.

Zobel dodged questions on what he planned to do during his retirement, simply saying, "That's my secret."

EMOTIONAL/B2

INDICATORS CURRENCIES

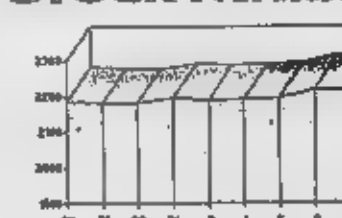


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P 51.12 = \$
As of 5 p.m., April 7, 2006

Y 117.63 = \$1
As of 5 p.m., April 7, 2006

GOLD: \$596.50-597.00
per ounce Hong Kong, April 7, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks down on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.16-percent lower yesterday as investors took modest profits after sharp gains Thursday, dealers said. The pullback followed two days of gains that brought the market to its highest level in nearly seven years, with trade expected to be

STOCKS/B2

PSE names new board today

THREE GROUPS ARE SEEN VYING FOR CONTROL of seven broker seats at today's Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) elections using proxy votes, INQUIRER sources said.

The exchange is holding its annual stockholders' meeting and will elect a new 15-member board—seven to be occupied by stockbrokers and eight by private sector nominees.

Veteran broker Vivian Yuchengco has teamed up with fellow PSE director William PSE/B2

\$20.84B IN END-MARCH

Forex reserves hit historic high

By Doris C. Dumlaog

STRONG FOREIGN INFLOWS LIFTED the country's gross international reserves to a new historic high of \$20.84 billion at end-March, up by 1.2 percent from \$20.59 billion in February.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Officer in Charge Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the high GIR level was due "mainly to the

deposit by the national government of its loan proceeds, as well as the Bangko Sentral's foreign exchange operations and income from investments abroad."

The GIR build-up over the past few months has been supported by proceeds from the front-loading of the government's foreign borrowings, remittances from overseas Filipino

workers and, to a certain extent, foreign direct investment and portfolio inflows.

In the first quarter alone, the government raised \$2.1 billion from fresh global bond offerings. But these inflows were partly offset by payments of maturing foreign obligations of the public sector, which ac-

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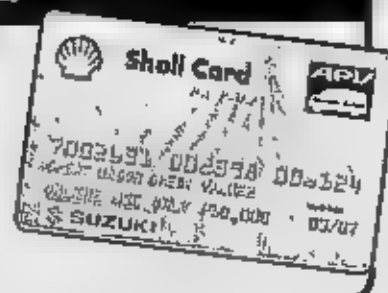
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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Editor Cesar D. Mangswang
Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

WHO calls on states to help avert crisis on health workers

By Charles E. Buban

ON ANY GIVEN day, scores of patients arrive at the government-run University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital with all sorts of medical complaints. From the elderly in wheelchairs who suffer from severe arthritis to young cancer patients trying to cope with their disease, the patients provide a daunting variety of ailments for the country's largest medical institution.

But equally daunting is the chronic shortage of doctors, nurses and other medical workers to treat them.

"Often, the number [of medical and support staff] is not enough to keep up with the demand," said Dr. Gerardo Cornelio, an oncologist at the UPPGH.

According to the 2004 paper "Brain Drain Phenomenon and its Implications on Health" authored by Dr. Jaime Gaivez-Tan, Fernando Sanchez and Virginia Balanon, the PGH loses 300 to 500 nurses of their 2,000 health workforce every year.

Tan is the executive director of the National Institutes of Health-Philippines and former secretary of health.

Critical shortage

Other hospitals elsewhere in the world experience the same problem.



The World Health Organization estimates that 4.25 million doctors, midwives, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and support staff are needed to fill the gap.

Acknowledging the severity of the situation, the WHO dedicated this year's World Health Day celebration (April 7) tackling the problems besetting the 59 million health workers worldwide.

The key issues raised included the increasing difficulty in training, supporting and retaining health workers, shortage of health educators and trainers, support staff and managers, and the continuing exodus of health-care workers from the developing world where there is a critical shortage.

The WHO urged governments to take the lead in developing educated and well-trained health workers, ensuring safe and supportive working conditions, enhancing the effectiveness of the health workforce through new

strategies, and tackling the now-widening imbalances and inequities in the availability and migration of health workers.

"Solutions to this crisis must be worked out at local, national and international levels, and must involve governments, the United Nations, health professionals, nongovernment organizations and community leaders," said Dr. Tim Evans, WHO assistant director general of the Evidence and Information for Policy cluster.

Possible activities

The WHO gave examples of activities that can be done by individuals and organizations, including:

- Advocating for the right to health to provide momentum for change and for increased accountability and transparency in health decision-making.
- Raising awareness of the scope of the health worker crisis and possible solutions.
- Policy advocacy (for exam-

ple, in relation to the training, supporting and retaining of health workers)

• Research and intelligence gathering to better understand current health worker numbers and their distribution and to inform effective interventions.

• Network building to engage different sectors and agencies in planning and implementing policies.

• Action monitoring to encourage interventions and measure their impact.

"At WHO, we feel that it is only right that Asia's healthcare workers be given the recognition they deserve for the vital contribution they make to all our lives," Dr. Shigeru Omi, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, said in a statement.

"It is high time they were paid decent salaries and provided the right working conditions and the right equipment to do the work they are trained to do."

Multiplication trick

FELIMAR BLANCO (SIAGUON@hotmail.com), a Filipino now based in Houston, Texas, shares this multiplication trick, which he learned from his father back in Grade 4 in Aklan. He would periodically "fool around" with it in high school until he refined this "Bajaynon Method."

For example, to multiply 3589 and 7241, write the multiplier in reverse (1427) on the edge of a small piece of paper. Then slide the piece of paper accordingly as shown below.

3589
1427 Multiply 9 and 1 to get 9. Jot 9.

3589
1427 Multiply 8 and 1 (8), then 9 and 4 (36).

Add 8 and 36 to get 44. Carry over 4 and jot 4 left of 9 so we now have 49.

3589 Carried 4
1427 Multiply 5 and 1 (5), then 8 and 4 (32), then 9 and 2 (18).

Add 4, 5, 32 and 18 to get 59. Carry over 5 and jot 9 so we now have 949.

3589 Carried 5
1427 Multiply 3 and 1 (3), then 5 and 4 (20), then 8 and 2 (16), then 9 and 7 (63).

Add 5, 3, 20, 16, 63 to get 107. Carry over 10 and jot 7 so we now have 7949.

3589 Carried 10
1427 Multiply 3 and 4 (12), then 5 and 2 (10), then 8 and 7 (56).

Add 10, 12, 10, 56 to get 88. Carry 8 and jot 8 so we now have 87949.

3589 Carried 8
1427 Multiply 3 and 2 (6), then 5 and 7 (35).

Add 8, 6, 35 to get 49. Carry 4 and jot 9 so we now have 987949.

3589 Carried 4
1427 Multiply 3 and 7 (21). Add 4 and 21 to get 25. Jot 25 to get the final answer, which is 25987949.

Blanco says it is better to use the number with lesser digits as multiplier.

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EUREKA!

Queen N. Lee-Chua



studying. She said she could endure 24 to 36 hours with no sleep. Does staying awake for more than two days make a person crazy? I ask this because I wonder why doctors' minds can work even without sleep.

All of us have gone through a sleepless night or two from time to time, but this does not mean that it is healthy for us to do so. Numerous studies have shown that lack of sleep contributes to irritability, daytime fatigue, lack of concentration, impaired motor and cognitive skills, and even weight gain.

I have not come across any finding that says sleeplessness will make a person crazy, but I daresay it is not far fetched to think so.

I asked my doctor friends about their sleeping habits. They admitted that they certainly needed more rest and that their minds (and treatment of patients) would be less than ideal if they did not sleep for a couple of nights. So there is no truth to your last statement, doctors are human beings, too, and their minds cannot work as well without rest.

Books on math

Leonilo Lopido (statman252003@yahoo.com) has this query:

I am an avid reader of your column and I would like to ask for a list of your latest books that would help me explore the world of mathematics. I am a BS Statistics graduate and am currently employed at the Philippine Information Agency in Tacloban City. Is there a bookstore near my place where I can get hold of your books?

Several of my math books are published by Anvil, which means they should be available in the National Bookstore in your area. If not, please call Anvil at 637-5141/3621 and look for Lone. You can also e-mail them at anvil-sales@eudoramail.com. Thank you for your support.

Undersea mysteries

THE SHORT-LIVED TV SERIES "SeaQuest DSV" used to start by saying that "beneath the [ocean's] surface...lies the future."

News reports bemoan the disappearance every day of numerous species of plants and insects that may hold the keys to treating diseases. The loss of these species often distracts from the knowledge that the seas hold mysteries of their own. Two recent papers demonstrate this.

First up in last year's issue of *Zoosystema*, a scientific publication from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, researchers from several countries wrote about a new genus and species of deep-sea crustacean.

White, hairy crustaceans

A year ago, lead author Michel Segonzac of the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (Ifremer) and his colleagues were exploring hydrothermal vents along the Pacific-Antarctic Ridge not far from the Galapagos Islands. It was part of an expedition organized by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute.

Scientists on board the submarine *Alantis* noticed several white and hairy crustaceans near the vents.

They seemed to have marked territories, with only one to two of them every 10 square meters on the basalt layer surrounding the vents, although they shared the space with other species of crustaceans.

Yeti crabs

Scientists hypothesized that they were omnivorous, having

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

seen them eating some mussels. Based on their physical appearance, the scientists called them Yeti crabs and collected a sample for study.

A look at a picture of the Yeti crab shows that it looks like a white crab with long pincers that seem to belong to a lobster, except that lobsters don't have furry pincers.

The fine filaments or setae covering their long pincer-like forearms were found to contain bacteria, which the scientists think might be used to detoxify minerals in the crab's surroundings.

Unlike other crabs

The creature is blind. But the pale eyes that weren't immediately obvious—being greatly reduced in size compared to other species—moved instead of remaining fixed in place, and were located near the antennulae.

In short, Segonzac et al. found that the Yeti crab wasn't really like other crabs, which is why they proposed that it belonged to a new family of its own and proposed the name *Kiwahirsuta*. *Kiwa* is the Polynesian goddess of shellfish, while *hirsuta* is Latin for "hairy."

Lefties better

The second set of research with crab-related news doesn't have equally fascinating photos. Instead, Gregory Dietl from Yale University and Jonathan

Hendricks from Cornell University have a brief and intriguing theory on why marine snails with left-handed shells are better off than their more common right-handed counterparts.

Better protection

First published online last March 21 in *The Royal Society's* journal *Biology Letters*, Dietl and Hendricks theorized that the sinistral shells better protect the tasty snails from preying right-handed crabs.

Many things in the world tend to be predominantly right-handed or dextral, from people themselves to the way organs curve in the body to amino acid structures. Shells are no exception, dextral shells are ones where the opening is on the right side when the apex (the pointed end) faces away from the shell's bearer.

It turns out that crabs, which are also predominantly right-handed, have a special tooth on their right pincers that they use to break and sort of unroll the snail's shell to get at its meal. When a right-handed crab tries to crack a left-handed shell, however, the opening is on the wrong side and the crab can't easily get at the snail.

Other shells, too

This theory is borne out in several pairs of whelk and cone snail shells examined by Dietl and Hendricks.

They're apparently not very good at making and passing on the gene to more snails, though, since sinistral shell snails remain a minute portion of the population. But then the seas are also known for not revealing all of their secrets at once.

Aloe vera for heart disease, cancer?

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

RITA NOLASCO OF BF HOMES Parañaque reacted to my comments last week regarding chelation therapy for coronary heart disease (CHD). She said her husband felt a lot better after undergoing a complete course of intravenous infusion of chelation drugs plus some oral supplements, including aloe vera.

I sincerely hope her husband's subjective or symptomatic improvement is really due to an actual reduction in the atherosclerotic obstruction of his coronary arteries. But "feeling better" does not necessarily

MEDICAL FILES

mean that one is actually getting better. A placebo effect could not always be discounted.

It is best if he goes back to his heart doctor and have a repeat test to check his coronary arteries. If the repeat tests show remarkable regression or reduction in the atherosclerosis and no other drugs were taken, one can presume, but not conclude, that chelation therapy was the cause of the clinical improvement.

Study on aloe vera

I decided to look for scientific literature about the use of aloe vera for heart disease as it was the first time I heard about it.

I was able to locate a study on aloe vera for CHD prevention, authored by Dr. OP Agarwal and his colleagues and published in the August 1985 issue of the *Angiology* journal. A total of 5,000 patients with established CHD and who had chest pains were studied over five years.

Aloe vera and husk fiber were added to the diet in one group, which later showed a marked reduction in total serum cholesterol,



serum triglycerides, fasting and postprandial (after eating) blood sugar level. These effects were more prominent in diabetics. A significant improvement in "good" cholesterol was also noted.

The patients showed a reduction in the frequency of anginal attacks and the investigators reported that drugs like verapamil, nifedipine, beta-blockers and nitrates were gradually reduced.

The exact mechanism of the two substances is not known, but the authors said it appeared that they act through their high fiber content. The authors said there was no untoward side effect and all 5,000 patients were still alive at the end of the study.

Although the patient population appears robust enough, I'm not too

sure about the validity of the research protocol. Both aloe vera and husk fiber need further evaluation. As a general rule though, it is well accepted that a high-fiber diet is beneficial for heart patients.

Cancer therapy

I came across a several literature and commentaries from cancer specialists on the potential anticancer benefits of aloe vera. The potential for natural cancer therapy with supplements like aloe vera and melatonin has been suggested and these substances, called immunomodulators, may benefit certain forms of cancer.

Oncologist Glen Hyland from the Mayo Clinic reviewed the health histories of 100 cancer patients who used aloe vera therapy as a part of their cancer treatment. He marveled at the speed at which patients receiving glyconutrients from aloe vera experienced a reduction in the size of squamous cell carcinomas (lung) and oat cell carcinomas (usually originating in the bronchus or lungs).

And the patients' erythrocytes (red blood cells), leukocytes (white blood cells), and thrombocytes (platelets) did not diminish. A serious reduction in these blood elements is a potential threat in patients undergoing cancer chemotherapy.

Dr. Hyland commented that normal cells appeared protected and abnormal cells appeared more sensitive to treatment when aloe vera was made part of an integrated approach.

Available data are still not that conclusive. I would label them more as expert observations and opinions which, in the ladder of evidence-based medicine, hold the lowest position. But I have no objection to patients trying aloe vera, melatonin and other natural immunomodulators as an adjunct supplement, and not as a replacement, to established forms of cancer therapy.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR LICENSE

Notice is hereby given that C-MAN MARITIME INC. has filed an application with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration for a license to engage in sea-based recruitment.

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(PCI - April 8, 2006)

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Sealed proposal will be received by the NEECO II-Committee on Disposal of Non-Performing Assets at NEECO II Main Office on or before 2:00 p.m. May 4, 2006 at which time and place of said proposal will be opened and read in the presence of Bidders or Bidder's authorized representatives who choose to attend. Late submission will not be accepted.

Pre-bid Conference and inspection of scrap materials will be conducted at the NEECO II Main Office at 2:00 p.m. on April 26, 2006.

All bids submitted must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than ten (10%) percent of the total bid price.

The NEECO II hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the cooperative.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. JOSEPHINE L. BADIOLA**
 Chairperson, Committee on Disposal

(PCI - April 8 & 9, 2006)

SAGIP LINGAYEN GULF PROJECT

**Sustaining the Management of Coastal Resources
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The University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UPMSI), and Marine Environment and Resources Foundation (MERF) is implementing a 5-year project (2003-2007) to help Provinces of Pangasinan and La Union manage the coastal resources of Lingayen Gulf. We are looking for team members of integrity and excellence for the following positions:

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT LEAD FOR HABITATS

He or she shall be the component lead accountable for all activities of the Project related to the Habitats Component (Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Mangroves), and shall ensure that this component coheres well with the over-all Project Management Plan. He or she shall supervise Habitat Resources Management activities to achieve specific and overall project objectives and ensure that this component coheres well with the overall project management plan.

Qualifications:

- Master's in Environmental Science, Marine Science or other related fields
- Extensive experience in sustainable community-based programs for marine and mangrove protection and rehabilitation, at least 5 years experience in senior position.

ADMIN AND FINANCE OFFICER

He or she shall provide over-all administrative, personnel, financial and logistics management support to the Project. He or she shall facilitate periodic internal review and improvement of the Project financial management system and the preparation of six-monthly financial reports.

Qualifications:

- Master's in Development Finance or certified accountant with extensive experience in public and NGO/PO accounting
- Extensive experience in all aspects of Financial Management (i.e., system set-up, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of efficiency ratios). At least 5 years experience in a senior Administrative and Finance position

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

He or she shall provide administrative and human resources management support to the Project. He or she shall implement and monitor compliance with the administrative standards of the Project employees.

Qualifications:

- At least 3 years experience in a human resources management position
- High degree of attention to detail and quality of work
- Interpersonal, negotiation and conflict management skills

Personnel to be hired should have a CWAG of 2.25 or better in academic subjects relevant to his/her expertise & shall be based in Bolinao, Pangasinan. Must be computer literate.

Please send your application letter, curriculum vitae and transcript of academic records on or before April 23, 2006. Applications that arrive after that date will be considered only if the positions are not yet filled.

Submit letter of interest and resume with transcript of academic records to:

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OBITUARIES

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 OF THEIR BELOVED**

SR. ANGELINA LORENTE LIM, FMM

June 17, 1917 - April 6, 2006

Body lies in state at Stella Maris College, Cambridge
 St., Cubao, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later

In lieu of flowers donations to Sr. Angelina's projects
 will be greatly appreciated.

**PMAP, University of Makati partner
 for Certificate in Labor Relations**

THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER (HRMDC) of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) partners with University of Makati in holding a certificate course in Compensation Management to equip the participants with the relevant knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the exercise of the human resource development functions. PMAP and the faculty of University of Makati designed the Certificate in Labor Relations (CLR) course, which will run for eight Saturdays starting May 13 to July 1, 2006 at the Graduate School Building of University of Makati in West Rembo, Makati City. The CCM course is part of PMAP's Diploma in Human Resource Management (DHRM) program. Completion of five PMAP certificate courses merits a post-graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management. The other certificate courses are Certificate in Human Resource Planning and Acquisition (formerly Recruitment-Selection Placement), Certificate in Organization Development, Certificate in Compensation Management, and Certificate in Human Resource Management (CHRM). For other information, please call PMAP at tel. nos. 726-1532/81/88

OBITUARIES**GUILLERMINA AÑONUEVO FLETA**

OF LUCENA CITY

**PEACEFULLY RETURNED TO
 HER CREATOR**

ON APRIL 6, 2006 AT THE AGE OF 89.

Her children Msgr. Heraclio, Eugenio,
 Antonio & Florence, Renato & Grace,
 Joaquin Jr. & Cecille, Manuel & Annie;
 sister, Rosario and brother, Miguel;
 Grandchildren, request the readers to pray
 for her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at Bishop Alfredo Ma.
 Obviar Hall, St. Ferdinand Cathedral,
 Lucena City. Holy Mass is offered at 7:30 p.m.
 daily.

She will be laid to rest at Lucena Memorial
 Park on April 11, 2006 after the 1:30 p.m.
 Mass.

MIGUEL MA. EUGENIO MORAN Y ROXAS

*Passed into the light of our Lord on
 5 April 2006 at the age of 47.*

His bereaved mother, **Rosario**; daughter **Simone** & son-in-law **Roberto Herrera**; granddaughter **Niña**; brothers and sisters **Margarita** and **Antonio Floirendo**, **Ignacio** and **Eva**, **Lulette** and **Philip Monbiot**, **Sebastian** and **Charade**, **Francis** and **Alexandra**, **Martin** and **Concepcion**, and **Paul**, nieces and nephews request relatives, friends and readers to join in prayer for his soul's eternal peace.

His body lies in state in Redondo Beach, California.

Interment of his ashes will be at the Santuario de San Antonio Parish Church, Forbes Park, Makati City to be announced later.

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An 'Easter Family Fair' at Dusit

CELEBRATE EASTER AT THE GRAND BALLROOM of Dusit Hotel Nikko on April 16, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., and experience excitement and magic for the whole family with its "Easter Family Fair"

The "Easter Family Fair" creates a venue for families to bond with the exciting activity booths where you can play and win fabulous prizes. Not to be missed are the fun and entertaining activities lined-up for the kids like the: Kiddie Parlor Games; Acrobat Show; Mime Artist; Clown Balloon Twister; mascot appearances; jugglers; Caricature Artist Demo; Osh Kosh B'Gosh and Cinderella Fashion Show; Merit's art activity and the much-awaited "a-MAZE-ing Egg Hunt" wherein kids will go inside a maze to hunt for Easter eggs. Major prizes in the egg hunt includes resort stay at the Pearl Farm Beach Resort, Thal Vista, Puerto Azul, day tour at The Farm at San Benito and accommodations in one of Dusit Hotel Nikko's luxurious guestrooms for the family aside from the many amazing prizes from Toy Kingdom, Nickelodeon, Learning is Fun, Garfield, Carebears, Mega Blocks and Poly Pocket.

Joining the Easter festivities is quite simple. Just avail of Dusit Hotel Nikko's sumptuous

"Easter Family Brunch Buffet" at The Café for only P950++ for adults and P475++ for kids (12 years and below) to get your free access coupon to the event. Even better, stay in the Hotel and avail of the "Easter Room Package" (valid from April 10 to 16) and get your free access coupons to the Easter event. Dine in any of the hotel's Asian specialty restaurants on April 16, for a minimum single receipt purchase of P950, you get exclusive access to the "Easter Family Fair." Parents and guardians accompanying the kids are free of charge. The activities, freebies

from Nestle Ice Cream, Chuckie, Trix, Purefoods, Regent, Wingle's, Smiles and Egg Bites, among others and loot bags are for kids only.

The "Easter Family Fair" was organized to pay tribute to the family this summer in partnership with Metrobank Fun Savers Club, Royal Esquire Britanny, Rustan's Essences, Nestle Food Services, Universal Robina Corp, JUS Entertainment, Party Works, Enchanted Kingdom and Sky Cabie.

See you all at Dusit Hotel Nikko! For inquiries and reservations, call 867-3333

Somerset reaches out to Leyte land slide victims

ASCOTT ONCE AGAIN DEMONSTRATES the Heartware philosophy of service from the heart and going the extra mile when Somerset Serviced Residences, Philippines goes beyond the walls of their three properties in Makati in their latest effort.

After a heavy downpour disintegrating a mountainside in Southern Leyte, a landslide burying numerous households and an elementary school in the eastern region of the Philippines ensued. This natural calamity has taken the lives of hundreds and left many homeless and in need of basic provisions.

Somerset Millennium, Somerset Olympia and Somerset Salcedo Makati thus initiated a three-week donation drive to help the unfortunate. Launched in Feb 23, the Somerset staff initiated the Leyte Landslide Donation Drive and lent a helping hand to the victims of the tragedy. Cash donations, and other necessities such as canned goods, blankets, old clothes and toiletries donated generously were presented to the Philippines National Red Cross, who coordinated the relief efforts for the landslide victims.



CitiGym grand launching at Waterfront

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006 MARKED THE grand unveiling of Cebu City's foremost fitness hotspot, CitiGym, where health and fitness enthusiasts gathered to catch a glimpse of what would definitely change the metro's way of fitness. A subsidiary of Waterfront Philippines Inc (WPI), CitiGym is the first and only gym in the city that is open 24 hours a day. With these hours of operation, a workout will always be possible during a busy day. Whether you're only free at the crack of dawn, or at the stroke of midnight, you can be sure of a workout. Guests present during the opening were treated to live samplers of some of the Gym's different group exercise classes - Belly Dancing, Hi-lo Aerobics, Latin, Yoga, Tai-chi

and Boxing powered by Red Corner Boxing Club, to name a few. Aside from exciting, heart-racing classes and the latest in fitness equipment, exclusive member perks and privileges await, such as secured and covered parking, hot and cold showers, sauna and steam bath, computerized fitness and lifestyle analysis tests and nutritional counseling. Best of all, CitiGym members are entitled to 50 percent off on the tariff rates of Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino guestrooms and 10 percent off on food and beverage purchases at Uno, Treff Bar, Mizu, Tin Gow, Café Fortuna, Pool Aquarius, Madeleine, La Gondola and at the Lobby Lounge. The Gym also has its own health and snack bar, Powerhouse, which of-

fers healthy yet delectable menu choices alongside access to free wireless Internet. Now, going to the gym will not only be good for the body, but will also be a tasty treat for the mind. The Gym offers different membership packages specially tailored to fit varied lifestyle and fitness needs. Special discounted rates are also available for students, senior citizens and group enrollees.

CitiGym is located at the Lower Ground Floor of Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino, Salinas Drive, Lahug, Cebu City. For more information and inquiries, you may call (032) 232-6888 local 8941 or Manila Sales and Reservations Office at (02) 687-0888. You can also visit the website at www.waterfronthotels.net



BELLEVUE'S TWO PLUS ONE EASTER PROMO

Make the most of the Holy Week break and escape from the maddening Easter rush with Bellevue's 2+1 Easter Promo. For every two nights stay or two rooms booked, get the third night or the third room for free. Available during April 14-16 at P3,800++ per night deluxe room accommodation with free breakfast at the Café D'Asie, use of swimming pool and gym facilities, complimentary shuttle service to nearby malls and business districts, welcome drink at 20/20 Entertainment Bar, welcome fruit plate, two bottles of mineral water replenished daily, and local

newspaper. Plus, get two complimentary tickets to the Wild & Wacky Easter brunch event at the Bellevue Grand Ballroom on April 16. In time for the Lenten season, The Bellevue Hotel's 20/20 Entertainment Bar offers Seafood Fritto Misto, a deep-fried all-seafood platter with an assortment of delicious dips. Perfect for enjoying the Side A concert at April 21 or various bands playing nightly: Karaoke Night on Mondays, FM Band on Tuesdays, First Circle on Wednesdays, Silver on Thursdays, Soul and Traffic Jam on Fridays and Music Ventures on Saturdays. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

People, Events & Products

FIRST HEPATITIS B SUMMIT CONCLUDED WITH KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Organizers of the First Hepatitis B Summit present vital recommendations and conclusions to Sen. Pia Cayetano, a staunch advocate of Hepatitis B awareness and prevention, who was also the guest speaker during the event. The summit, organized by the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL), Hepatology Society of the Philippines (HSP), Philippine Foundation for Vaccination (PFV), Philippine Society for Gastroenterology (PSG), Philippine Cancer Society (PCS), and Philippine



Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (PASLD), aims to raise awareness, as well as update and improve understanding about the disease among medical professionals. Photo shows (from left) Lo-ann Villanueva of GlaxoSmithKline; Sen. Pia Cayetano; and Dr. Jose Sollano, Jr. (APASL).

MMCFCF, SM Lazo Medical Clinic choose Insular's Salary Savings Insurance Program

MAKATI MEDICAL CENTER FAMILY CREDIT COOPERATIVE (MMCFCF) and SM Lazo Medical Clinic, two institutions devoted to providing health care services, have recently chosen Insular Life to provide their members and employees financial security through its Salary Savings Insurance Program (SSIP). The SSIP is a convenient premium payment facility for employees or members of private and government entities who want to buy ordinary life insurance for themselves and their immediate family members and pay premiums on a monthly mode through salary deduction. The MMCFCF is an institutional cooperative of Makati Medical Center regular employees, and the Remedios Trinidad Romuadez Memorial Schools, including MMC physicians and their regular staff. SM Lazo, on the other hand, provides pre-employment medical examination to OFWs and those seeking employment in local companies. Insular Life, now on its 96th year, continues to provide a wide-range of products for individual and group financial security needs. For information on group insurance plans, call 893-9683 or 817-3051 ext. 5048 and 3221 and individual life insurance plans, call 771-1818 ext. 1317-1320, or log on to www.insularlife.com.ph.

Gov't may revise fiscal program

Increasing spending for pump-priming

By Doris C. Dumiao

THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO RE-
vise its medium-term fiscal program to allow
a two-year delay in the attainment of its goal
to post a budget surplus beginning 2009.

This is aimed at freeing up more funds for
economic pump-priming.

In his recommendation to the inter-agency
Development Budget Coordination Commit-
tee last Monday, Finance Secretary Margarito
Teves said the target should be to maintain a
balanced budget from 2008 to 2010 to allow
higher spending for pump-priming.

The original plan was to wipe out the bud-

get deficit by 2008 and post surpluses of P12.1
billion (0.1 percent of GDP) in 2009 and P17
billion (0.2 percent of GDP) surplus in 2010.

Based on the DBCC's latest forecast, govern-
ment debt as a percentage of GDP would slow
down in the medium term from 72 percent in
2005 to 68 percent this year. This, it said, would
further decline to 43 percent in 2010.

Instead of tightening its belt too much to post a
surplus starting 2009, Teves said there should be a
leeway for increased spending for priority sectors.

"The committee agreed to use existing fiscal
figures up to 2008 and revise those for 2009 and
2010 as proposed by Sec. Teves," a source said.

The government, however, will stick to its
commitment to balance the budget by 2008, in
line with the front-loading of fiscal reforms.

Agost Benard, associate director for
sovereign ratings at global rating firm Stan-
dard & Poor's, said in a recent forum that a
balanced budget was not even a prerequisite
for a ratings upgrade.

"What's important is the capacity to generate
more revenues, to reduce your outstanding
debt stock and at the same time increase spend-
ing for infrastructure and education in order to
increase future growth prospects," Benard said.

Lepanto posts P409M in losses due to labor woes

By Christine A. Gaylican

LEPANTO CONSOLIDATED MINING CO. INC.
said that a four-month labor dispute in the
company dragged its financial performance
in 2005, ending the year with a net loss of
P409.53 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Ex-
change (PSE), Lepanto said its gold and silver
sales last year dropped to P1.4 billion from P2.25
billion, as mineral production dropped due to
the workers' strike from June to September.

The company said minerals milled decreased
by 40 percent to 471,710 tons in 2005 from
784,720 tons in 2004. Its ore extraction rate av-
eraged at 1,667 tons per day last year, which
was 24 percent lower than the 2004 level.

Lepanto said it was forced to reduce gold pro-
duction by 42 percent and was unable to take ad-
vantage of the 10 percent increase in gold prices.
This resulted in a 38-percent drop in gross rev-
enue to P852 million from P2.25 billion in 2004.

Its operating income plunged 186 percent
to negative P304 million in 2005 from P352
million in the previous year.

The company reported a retrenchment cost of
P51 million and P114 million in impairment loss-
es, which formed part of its total cost in 2005.

Lepanto, which began mining operations in
1936, was a major copper producer until it shut
down its operations in 1997. It then shifted to
gold production through its Victoria Project. It
now operates two mines—the Victoria and the
Teresa—both in Mankayan, Benguet.

The company also runs three wholly-
owned subsidiaries—Shipside Inc., Diamond
Drilling Corp. and Lepanto Investment and
Development Corp. Through LIDC, Lepanto
owns 80 percent of Diamant Board Philip-
pines Inc. and 60 percent of Far Southeast
Gold Resources Inc.

Ford launches flex-fuel engines

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FORD MOTOR CO. PHILIPPINES URGED THE
government to adopt policies that would en-
courage local sugar producers and car makers
to develop vehicles that run on cleaner fuels.

Henry Co., Ford Philippines Group president,
said: "We have made the cars, now give us the fu-
el that will enable us all to harvest the benefits."

Co said this at the launch of Ford's new line
of sedans equipped with engines that can run
on either pure gasoline or a gasoline blend
with as much as 20-percent ethanol.

The official explained that ethanol is an al-
cohol fuel made from sugar and starches
found in plants like sugarcane, cassava, corn
and potatoes.

"Imagine the development that ethanol
production can bring about in the provinces
that produce these crops," Co said.

He said using ethanol could reduce the
country's dependence on foreign oil, ensure
energy security, help improve the balance of
trade, and create more economic activity in
the countryside.

Last December, Ford announced it was infusing
\$20 million to enable its Sta. Rosa plant become
the first flexible fuel engine factory in the region.

The Sta. Rosa facility is expected produce
100,000 units of flex-fuel engines valued at
about \$100 million over the next five years.

In a statement, Energy Secretary Raphael
RM. Lotilla lauded Ford Philippines "for
promptly responding to the government's al-
ternative transport fuels program."

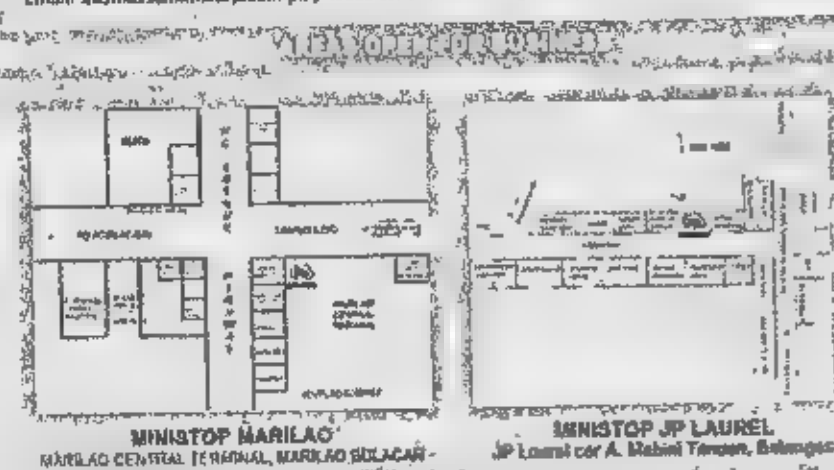
Lotilla said he anticipated that other car
manufacturers would follow suit in order to
achieve the wider use of bio-fuels for transport.

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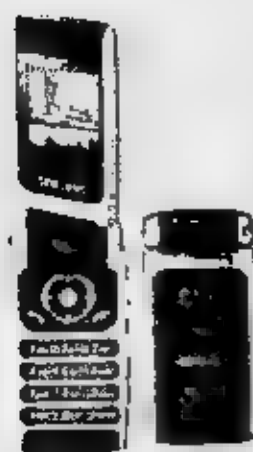
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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

PROPERTY

Smart home finds its way to RP

By Tessa R. Salazar

IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF time. When the West developed the Internet and wireless technology, and somehow integrated it into the home, there would be no doubt that this nifty magic of electronics

would eventually migrate south and east to the tropics. And now, finally, the "smart home" is here.

A 150-square-meter simulation of the "Filipino home of the future," complete with an Internet-controlled refrigerator that could read barcodes for expiry dates, an Internet-

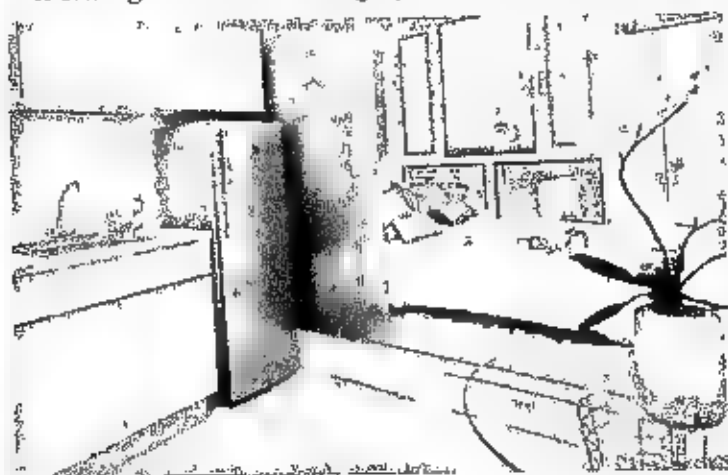
SMART/B2-5

MICROSOFT
lifestyle layout

MEZZA RESIDENCES: GET A TASTE OF THE GOOD LIFE

From the country's most respected names in retailing and mall development comes a project that's soon to be a by-word in condominium living—the Mezza Residences.

Situated at Aurora Boulevard corner Araneta and Guirayan Streets in the heart of Quezon City, the impressive Mezza Residences has four 38-storey residential towers. Offering one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and suite units with introductory prices ranging from one to five million, Mezza Residences is suited for young professionals yearning for their first taste of independence or starting-out families seeking a place to call home.



1-Bedroom Unit

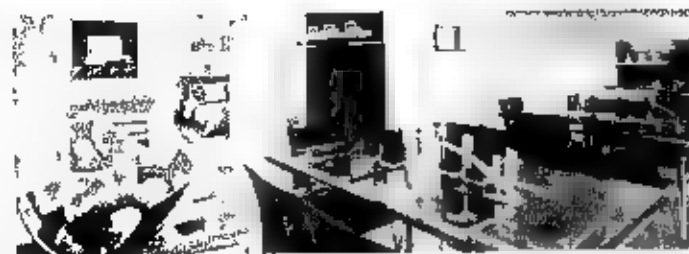
"Mezza Residences is metropolis living at its most convenient," shares Julie Jalandoni, Assistant Vice President for Sales and Marketing of SM Development Corporation (SMDC). "Everything one can ever need is right here, thus saving on gas, energy, and precious time. We really had the lifestyle of today's urbanites in mind in developing this project—addressing as many of their living requirements."

Each tower has three high-speed elevators and ample parking. There is a main lobby in each tower and a welcome lobby on each floor as well. An individual laundry drying area for each unit and a centralized garbage collection and disposal system are provided for added convenience.

Supported by the SM Group of Companies and Banco de Oro, Mezza Residences allows you to enjoy a wide variety of activities all under one roof. Cafes, service, and retail establishments are conveniently located at the podium at the ground and second level.

"Everyone can go home and do all their shopping right here. Young urbanites can dine out and have a good time with their friends," adds Jalandoni. "Mezza truly finds its hallmark on convenience. But more than just that, SMDC puts this together in a great package with well-planned floor areas and generous open spaces."

Mezza Residences takes pride in its lush greens. Unique to this project is its sprawling 1,000 square meter lawn—an inviting place where families can have a picnic, play catch with the kids, or take an afternoon nap.



3-Bedroom Unit

Giving importance to healthy living, a Zen-inspired garden with a meditation area and a reflexology path relaxes the mind and spirit of the weariest urban dweller. Kids can soak up the sun in the kiddie pool while adults can stay fit by swimming in the 25-meter lap pool.

Here at Mezza Residences, it's all about living the city life to the fullest.

It is a short distance away from the Central Colleges of the Philippines, the Immaculate Heart of Mary College, the UERM Hospital, the UERM Memorial Medical Center, the LRT 2 Sta. Mesa Station, and the bustling Araneta area. Everything indeed is within your reach. The Mezza Residences is a project of the SMDC. For inquiries, call 831-5151 or 0918-8881203. Log on to the SMDC website at www.smdevelopment.com. Model units are available for viewing at the SM City Sta. Mesa.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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RESIDENCES

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Panoramic view of Metro Manila Skyline

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Modern convenience with cafes, service and retail shops at the podium

Outdoor function deck and function rooms

Zen garden with meditation area and reflexology path

Healthwalk and cabanas dotting the gardens

25 meter lap pool with submerged lounge deck

Interactive water jets, wet play area and playground

A thousand square meter lawn

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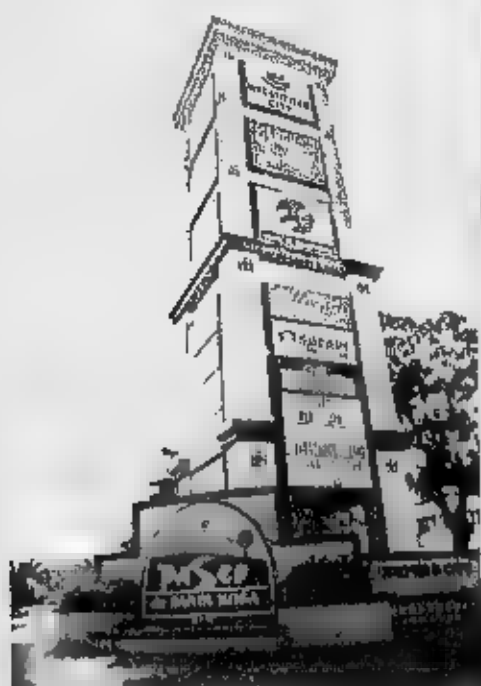
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CrownAsia elegantly signs a new name across the blue skies of Sta. Rosa

Hundreds of genius hours are spent before CrownAsia proclaims a new site as a "signature project." Such is the case with Valenza, Sta. Rosa.

Significant intercity locations. CrownAsia homeowners are self-made success stories. They need to live, work and play near business and productivity centers. Sta. Rosa is exactly this. Major world names in industry are positioned for their regional production, spawning a new town of technical and managerial stars.



Outstanding site development themes. CrownAsia signature homes lean heavily on Italian elan to distinguish each project look from all others around the area.

Value-for-money technical excellence. The consultants, architects and engineers of CrownAsia labor to put more sense and save cents in each aspect of development. Space-saving features, practical technical specs allow CrownAsia to plow back savings into making signature projects outpace competition.



Sta. Rosa. The new boomtown of the upwardly mobile self-made success stories. It's Southward Ho! New creative business minds are making the move away from the traditional Metro Manila central business districts to Sta. Rosa. With eyes set on enterprise opportunities in the growing population of Sta. Rosa and the increasing visitor critical mass of Tagaytay, the population of young investor entrepreneurs is steadily increasing. Valenza will provide the perfect home for this bright-eyed class of aggressive achievers.



CrownAsia Signature Homes are stand outs, wherever the new silk flags fly to herald a new project.



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CROWN

Valenza

STA. ROSA

Center stage is the only place for a stand out.

There is only one village that stands out so proudly in boomtown Sta. Rosa. Valenza. As only fitting for a stand out, Valenza's architectural trademarks are classic cupolas, domes, and stunning landscaping.

Valenza is beautifully nestled in between cool Tagaytay and the blossoming town of Sta. Rosa. Shopping, entertainment and dining are only 5 minutes away from its gates. Alabang, a quick zip down the SLEX.

Before you make a firm choice, visit Valenza. It won't be hard to find, as it is easy to fall in love with.



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PROPERTY

Lead poisoning in your home

LEAD POISONING IS ONE OF THE MOST common and preventable public health problems among young children. Many are now aware that even small amounts of lead can have disastrous effects.

There is no safe blood lead level. Chronic exposure to high levels of lead can cause brain damage, affect a child's growth, damage kidneys, impair hearing, as well as cause vomiting and headaches. It can cause learning and behavioral problems for children. In adults, lead can increase blood pressure and can cause digestive problems, nerve disorders, sleep problems and mood changes.

Fetuses, infants and children are more vulnerable to lead exposure than adults since lead is more easily absorbed into growing bodies. Another reason is that small children are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. This is especially the case with children from infancy to six years of age because their brains and nervous system are not yet fully developed.

Children who are lead toxic may have no outward appearance of illness. A child's behavior may be the only indication that he or she is accumulating toxic amounts of lead. There are now recorded cases where a child's unruly behavior like bullying and poor performance in school are directly linked to high lead exposure. Lead toxic children are normally identified as being "difficult to manage."

Studies with children show a seven times higher chance of dropping out of high school with lead exposure in early childhood and a higher rate of delinquent behavior in later adolescence.

Lead is a sweet-tasting highly toxic metal that produces various damaging effects on health especially young children.

Exposure to lead

The major cause of lead poisoning is deteriorating lead-based paint and the interior and exterior dust caused by such paint. Other sources could be air, drinking water, food and contaminated soil. Airborne lead enters the body when you breathe or swallow lead particles or dust once it has settled. Lead can leach into drinking water

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus



from certain types of plumbing materials, such as lead pipes, copper pipes with lead solder and brass faucets.

It can also be found on walls, woodwork and the exterior of homes in the form of lead-based paint. Lead can be deposited on floors, windowsills, eating and playing surfaces, or in the soil outside the home.

Most homes built before 1940 and half of homes built from 1940 to 1960 contain lead-based paint. Lead paint was banned from residential use in 1978. As a rule, the older the house, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint and a higher concentration of lead in the paint.

Past emissions of leaded gasoline now account for the high level of lead found in soil. This is why it is unsafe for children to play in the dirt or in dusty areas, even indoors. They then put their fingers, clothes, or toys in their mouths, or if they eat without first washing their hands.

What steps are being done?

For starters, the United States is spending \$147 million to address the problem of lead exposure from housing sources. They have established a system that considers the health of occupants and the physical condition of houses. They require blood lead screenings done on children especially in high-risk areas that are determined by the age of the housing, the number of poor families and the prevalence of children previously found to have elevated blood lead levels.

Certified lead inspectors and accredited lead removal contractors are helping many people in both poor and affluent sectors of their communities.

Canada is following suit. They are now fully aware of the problem and are actively enacting laws to address the problem of

lead exposure.

What RP is doing

What problem? In two words, this is what summarizes the state of affairs regarding our level of awareness about lead poisoning.

Our lawmakers can do a lot to help the people. Unfortunately, they are occupied with much more "urgent matters." Admittedly, the campaign is not going to be easy, as our western counterparts are finding out. But it has to start soon, otherwise the problem could get worse.

What you can do

If your home was built before 1978, chances are it contains lead-based paint. If you had a child under age six who may have been exposed to it, he or she should have a blood lead test. In children any blood lead level greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter is considered elevated blood lead level; for adults it is any blood lead level greater than 25 (µg/dl).

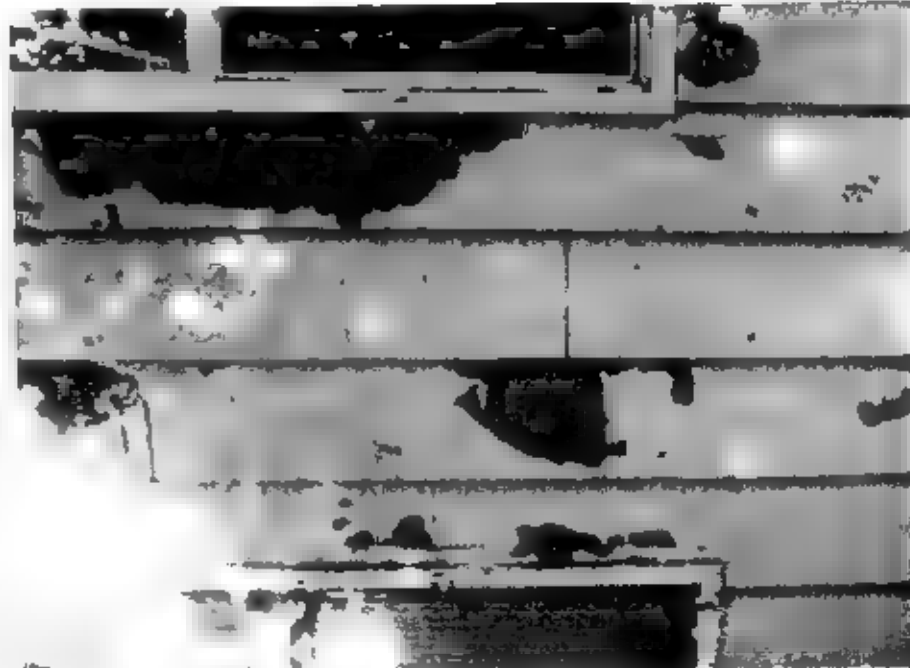
Some even encourage the use of hair elemental analysis as an adjunct to blood screening in detecting chronic exposure to metals such as lead and mercury.

Check your house for peeling and chipping paint. Clean it up and prevent your children from touching those areas. Cover these areas with contact paper and block them off with furniture. Cover old carpets. They can be full of lead dust. Let your children play elsewhere.

When cleaning, wet mop floors at least twice a week. Add detergent to the wash water and rinse. Wash window sills weekly. Do not rinse used paper towels. Just throw them away. The window sill is the part of the house that is normally in direct contact with young children. Some of them even chew on the paint found in window sills.

Put a washable floor mat outside your front and back service doors. Wash them weekly.

To prevent lead dust from getting to your child's mouth, wash his or her hands before eating. It also helps to keep your child's fingernails clean and trimmed.



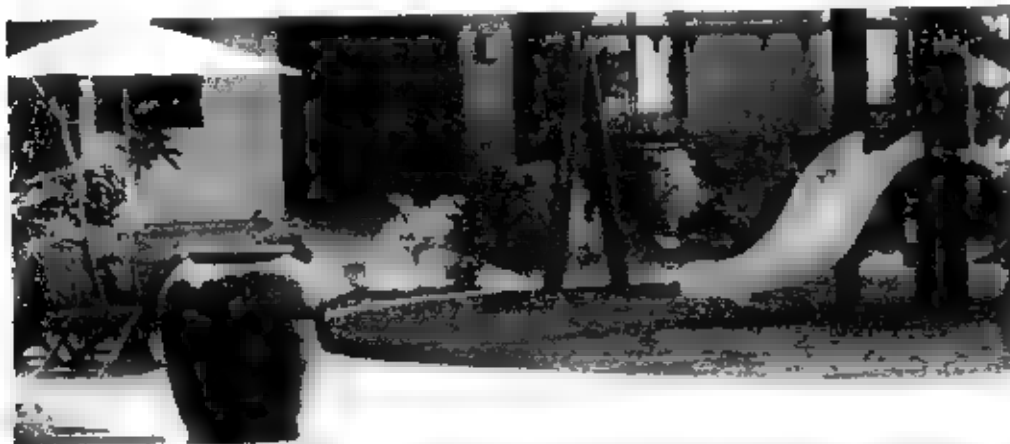
LEAD poisoning in homes is caused mainly by deteriorating lead-based paint and the dust inside and outside homes caused by such paint. Young children from infancy to age 6 are particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning, especially when they chew on the paint on window sills and other parts of the house.

WWW.HOMEPROHOUSE.COM

Fulfill your civic duty

The Philippine Business for the Environment (PBE) and their partners would like to encourage recycling by industry, organizations and individuals in their annual Recyclables Collection Events (RCE) from April 18 to 26, during Earth Week. These events facilitate both corporate economic development and corporate responsibility through recycling. Recycling diverts a large amount of still useful materials from the landfill that can be redeemed for cash. Over the past four years, the RCE events have steadily grown to include many businesses and members of the community.

This year's RCEs will be held between April 18 and 26. It will redeem recyclables such as used paper, used ink and toner cartridges, junk electronics and electrical equipment, used tires, used batteries, used motor oil, PET plastic bottles, aluminum cans. To inquire further about the RCE events, please call PBE at 635-3670, 635-2650 to 51, fax 631-5714, e-mail crem@csu.com.ph, or visit its website at www.pbe.org.ph. For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.



ROSEWOOD Pointe has top of the line amenities and recreational facilities.

Dev't adds business edge to resort amenities and home comfort

DMCI HOMES INTRODUCES ANOTHER take on its pioneering concept of combining the amenities of a resort with the highly improved standard features of a residential community when Rosewood Pointe, an enclave of 12 medium-rise condominium buildings, takes its place in Taguig's continuously evolving landscape.

More than striking a balance between meeting the demands of work and the promised comforts of home, DMCI Homes will be adding a business component to the leisure and home comfort features at Rosewood Pointe.

Residential haven

If the greater part of the community is dedicated to creating a residential haven, a portion of it, however, is reserved to address the occasional need by its prospective homeowners to transact business without delay right on the spot. To answer this particular need, the development's clubhouse is designed with dining halls, an audio-video room, a business center with Wi-Fi connectivity and ready facilities for a bistro operation.

When Rosewood Pointe finally rises on a 3.9-hectare property near The Fort, it will assume pride of place as one of the micro-communities of Central Square in Taguig.

Like DMCI Homes' much renowned mid-rise developments—East Ortigas Mansions, May-

field Residences and Vista de Lago Villas—Rosewood Pointe is expected to attract the same enthusiasm and interest from the middle-income market.

Amenities, facilities

Complete in amenities and recreation facilities, the latest DMCI Homes development will provide such sports and fitness facilities like a basketball/badminton court, swimming pool and a fully equipped gym. There are jogging paths, bicycle lanes and playgrounds and lush surroundings accentuated by a lily pond, garden fountains and staircases.

As commonly found in all DMCI Homes projects, Rosewood Pointe will have an atrium and single-loaded corridors for all its 12 condo buildings. Overall, it will carry the architectural character—minimal and clean lines—and the Zen appeal of the much-admired Mayfield Park Residences.

Accessibility

What gives the development a cutting edge is its accessibility. Located at about half a kilometer away from Circumferential Road 5 right across Heritage Park, the property is easily accessible from Bayani Road and Pasong Tamo Extension if you're coming from the Makati business district. But if you're proceeding from Ortigas and Rockwell, C-5 provides the main access road, thus making Rosewood Pointe a haven for professionals working in these areas.

Near and around the property are the best schools the country could offer—The International School, Assumption, Asia Pacific College, Colegio de San Agustin, British School and others. For homeowners with kids, Rosewood Pointe is the perfect place to live in.

The development is introducing end units with a three-bedroom floor plan, an offer carried only by the developer's tandem units, and a balcony where one can snatch another private place for meditation or for privacy. Price is pegged at P3 million. For advance property screening, interested parties may call 888-3333.

The Michelangelo: a grand salute to La Dolce Vita

MAVERICK PROPERTY DEVELOPER Brittany Corp. inspires a renaissance in luxurious living with a masterpiece that redefines what it means to live large.

The Michelangelo serves as a fitting testament to the innovative spirit of Brittany Corp. and its commitment to providing the highest standard of living possible. It belongs to the Masters Collection of the Italian-inspired development Portofino, a masterplanned community on a sprawling area of 300 hectares on the Las Piñas-Cavite-Laguna-Muntinlupa Link Road.

Italian theme

Just like the rest of the Portofino development, the Michelangelo carries the Italian theme but on a grander, more ambitious scale. It has Portofino's signature features such as courtyards, cupolas and balconies, only magnified to fit Michelangelo's structural splendor.

With about 625 square meters of floor area on an 810-sq-m lot, the Michelangelo is a home that exudes grandeur and sophistication rather than flaunts it. The imposing façade of rich terra cotta walls and striking Italianate details is enough to stop a guest at one's tracks.

A heavily carved door made of dark wood opens into a spacious, outer lobby area and offers a clearer view of the home's layout. The house wraps around a large courtyard with a horizontal fountain flowing freely from the back wall to the center of the garden.

Welcoming the guests inside the house is a reception area with textured walls in a glowing golden shade. To the right are glass doors leading to the courtyard while on the opposite side

are the stairs leading to the second level. Straight ahead is a grand living room where the homeowner can entertain in style.

The entryway is arched and the two columns that appear to support it were carved from the walls. On the left side is a balcony with ornate wrought-iron details for a more rustic feel. An entryway located at the far left leads to the dining room which can accommodate everything from posh get-togethers to intimate dinners.

Completing the ground level is the kitchen. Beige and black marble countertops run along two sides of the room while about four feet of counter space juts out to the center that can serve as a unique breakfast nook. Additional lighting enters the room through a tower of glass bricks on one corner and an open window just about the faucet. Storage is provided for by wooden shelves with glass doors decorated with ornate Roman-style carvings.

4 bedrooms

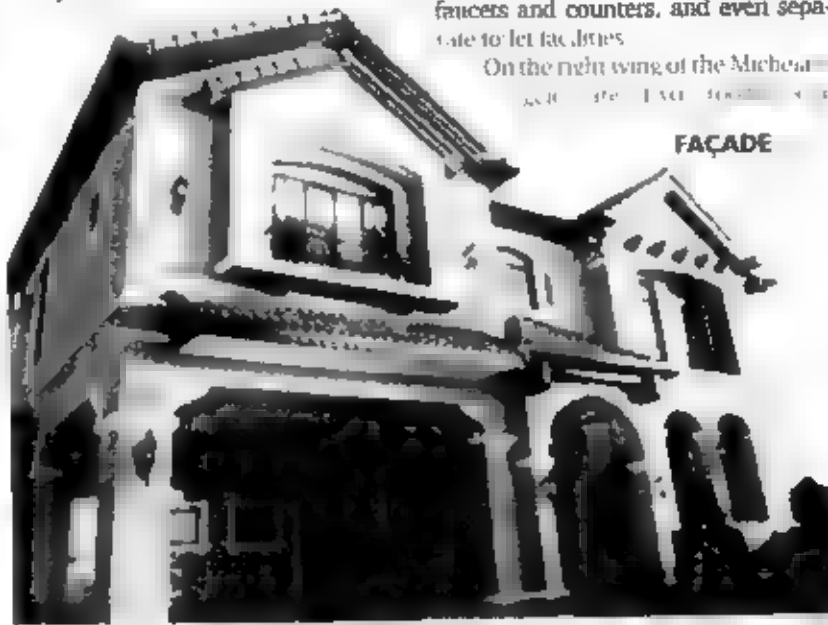
The Michelangelo has four bedrooms including the Master Suite, a special space designed specifically with the master and lady of the house in mind. A private reception area is situated between the second level's reception area and the rest of the master suite.

An entryway on the right side of the armoire leads to a large walk-in closet. Again, dark wood with ornate carvings reveal practical storage spaces for his and her clothes.

A white marble top island is set at the center of the room and provides additional storage underneath. The walk-in closet leads to the bathroom proper with a tub for two, his-and-hers faucets and counters, and even separate toilet facilities.

On the right wing of the Michelangelo is the

FAÇADE



LIVING room



ARCHWAY

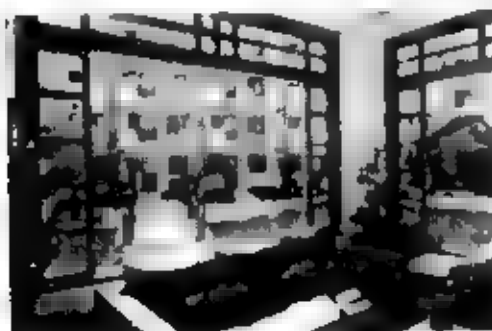
above another—that could serve as extra guest rooms or entertainment/game room. Both rooms open up to a view of the courtyard.

"We were not content with just developing The Courtyards. Being a maverick, we always want to push the limit. So we thought, why not? Contrary to what has been said, a lot of people still have money to purchase property. And probably also because with everything going on, property is still the safest investment there is," said Brittany Corp. president Jing Seranno.

Pioneering development

The Michelangelo of the Master's Collection is a pioneering development conceptualized and designed exclusively by Brittany Corp. The Masters Collection is a unique property within the Portofino development which includes Portofino Heights, Portofino South, the Courtyards of Portofino, Courtyards II, and WideLots of Portofino.

Brittany and its properties remain as a investment of choice in real estate development today. More than just a safe investment, it has developed into a wise choice for homeowners with a vision for the future. For inquiries and property previews, please call 850-2868 or 850-3084.



COMBINING the amenities of a resort with the standard features of a residential community

PRESIDIO'S DA VINCI TOWER

A glimpse of redefined urban living

INSPIRED BY THE URBANITE'S DREAM OF finding the ideal home, the country's biggest homebuilder, Crown Asia develops its first vertical community reflecting the continuous growth of their career and complementing their fast-paced lifestyle. With the first of the 16 towers of Presidio at Brittany Bay already completed, the unveiling of the Da Vinci Tower model unit grants a glimpse of how Crown Asia redefines urban living.

Crown Asia creates a self-contained multi-level hub by the bay located at the boundary of Sucat and Taguig, as the renowned partnership of Recco+Casas blends classic with contemporary and innovative condominium features. The unique design configuration of Presidio boasts of 16 towers interplaying in height and size to bring a sense of closely knit community while maintaining each resident's privacy.

Encompassing theme

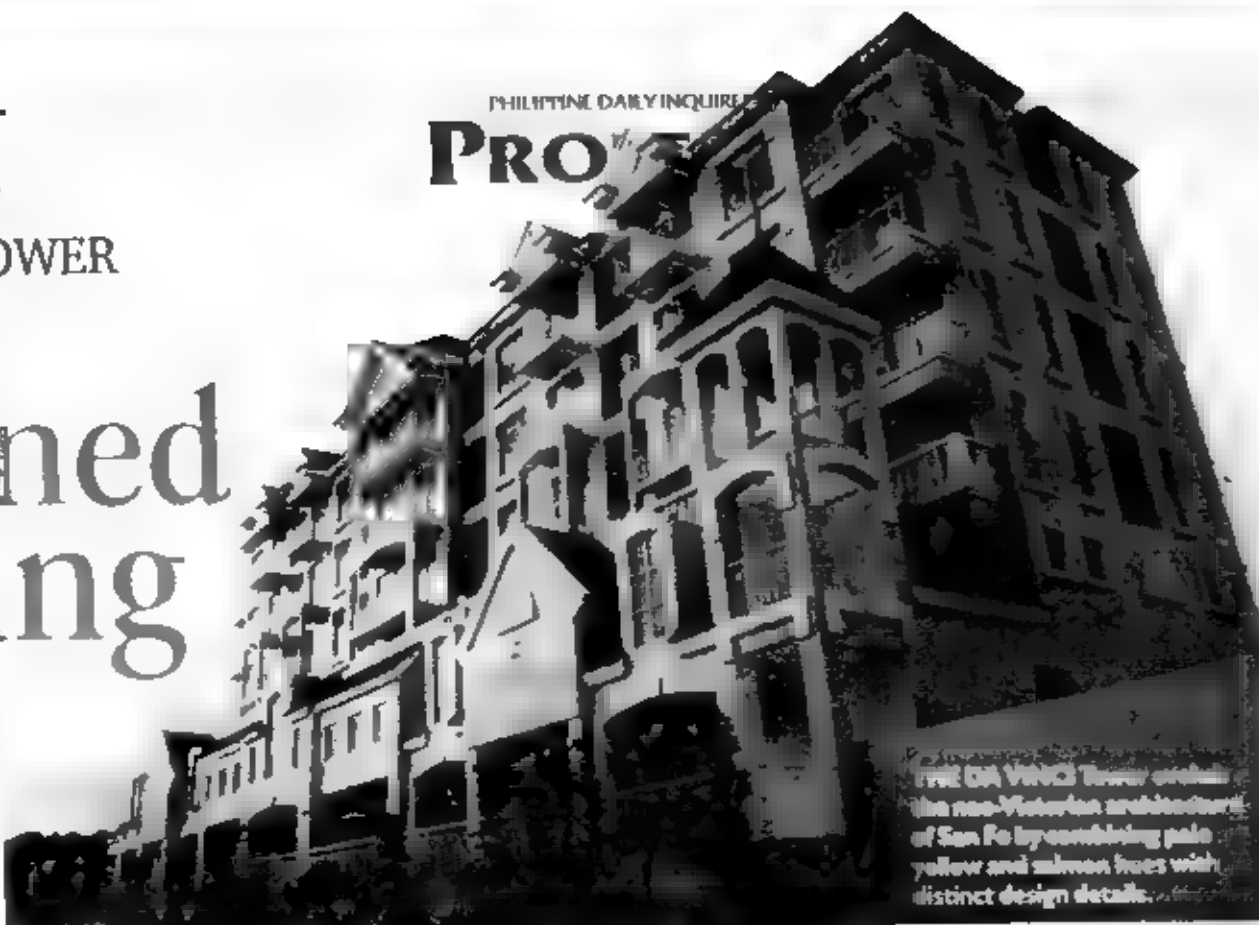
Distinguishing Presidio from other conventional condominiums is an encompassing theme inspired by San Francisco's neo-Victorian architecture evident in each tower as well as in the whole enclave. The exterior of the Da Vinci Tower is a combination of pale yellow and salmon hues while shingled roofs, intricate latticework, gable turrets, balconies and towers complete the San Francisco design style.

A five-story mixed-used (comprised of residential and commercial units) condo, the first floor of Da Vinci will house commercial establishments for the residents' convenience.

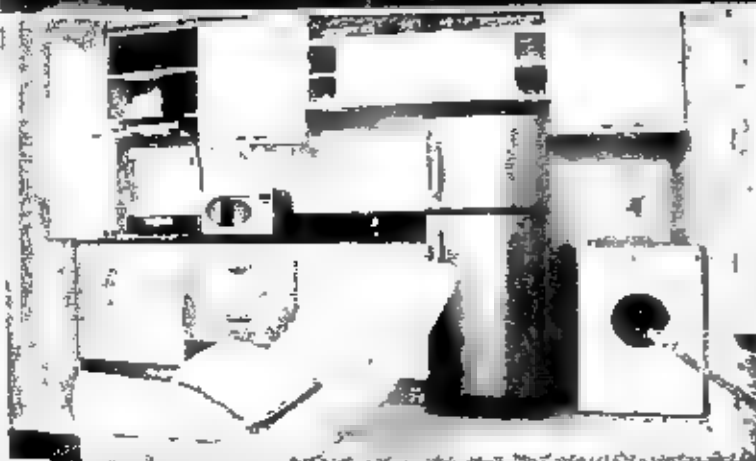
A separate entrance for the residents of Da Vinci is provided to ensure privacy and manned 24-hours a day to ensure the security of residents. Upon entering the condo, a lobby designed with a touch of relaxed elegance by esteemed interior designer Pinky Cruz welcomes you home.

Relaxed ambiance

The Asian-influenced interiors by Pinky Cruz lend a relaxed ambiance with a feel of flowing space throughout the two-bedroom 56-sq-m liv-



The Da Vinci Tower evokes the neo-Victorian architecture of San Francisco with pale yellow and salmon hues with distinct design details.



A BEAUTIFUL yet functional kitchen for preparing home-cooked meals with the whole family.



EARTH tones, Asian-influenced decors and a wide window leading to a balcony complete the living room's relaxed ambiance.

ing space of the Da Vinci model home. Dinners and get-togethers are made more pleasurable since the dining and living rooms face a wide window that opens to a balcony. A spacious kitchen is also available whenever you want to make a home-cooked meal for your family.

The child's bedroom is a cheerful retreat from a day at school or an afternoon of play around the neighborhood of Presidio. While rejuvenating in the master's bedroom, one only needs to step out onto the adjacent balcony for a glimpse of the bay. Though designed to please the eye, the architecture of each area is also built for function and comfort, keeping in mind that every space is very valuable in condo living.

Also available

A one-bedroom unit is also available for single professionals and young couples. Its 42-sq-m area is equipped with a dining and living area, kitchen and a toilet and bath. For larger families, a bigger vertical home can be attained by combining two or more adjacent units.

Each of the 36 residential units at Da Vinci features at least one balcony for a view of the Laguna de Bay and the Sierra Madre Mountains, while wide windows allow natural lighting and fresh breeze to waft into the home.

Presidio's "city by the bay" features a collection of low- and mid-rise, residential and mixed-used use towers. Da Vinci is only the first of five towers Crown Asia primarily launched for Presidio at Brittany Bay—the Rembrandt Tower, Michelangelo Tower, Monet Tower and the Picasso Tower.

For property previews, call up Crown Towers at 718-4057, 718-3400 or 02 or 717-3006 to 07.

Smart home finds its way to RP

From page B2-1

controlled washing machine, an Internet multiscree plasma TV, and even an Internet microwave oven, will be on display at the Shangri-La Makati Hotel from May 8 to 10.

But don't expect the Star Trek look. Think of it more like Anakin Skywalker's Aunt Beru's home in Tatooine: warm and comfy, nothing fancy and metallic.

First 'smart home,' RP style

The architect responsible for setting up the vision of a high tech home, Danilo A. Silvestre of DA Silvestre Association, has teamed up with Microsoft Philippines to create what could be the first mock-up "smart home," Filipino style.

Silvestre reveals he will be setting up a living room, an entertainment center, kitchen, study area, master's bedroom, master's toilet and a workstation based on the principle of this "smart home."

The mock-up home would be Wi-Fi and Internet-connected. It would not be a series of compartmented spaces, however, but would be interconnected to create the look that visitors are actually inside the house and not in a function room of a hotel.

What's more, the modernity of the appliances' features would be tempered by bamboo floorings, woven soliya, rattan for the wall panels and local art décor-items that are essentially Filipino-made.

"There's no attempt to make it look like the Jetson's house, or a futuristic home. It's a modern translation of what the team deems to be Filipino," says Silvestre.

Interconnected using Windows

They may not look like it, but the appliances, the workstations, the entertainment elements, the lighting, the telecommunications center, home security, electrical outlets and even the air-conditioning will be interconnected using Windows.

The entertainment center's centerpiece will be a 60-inch plasma TV fitted on the wall, complete with a 5.1 digital stereo system. Of course, a DVD player and an X-Box gaming console will be there, too. The walls will have woven soliya panels.

The master's bedroom will have another plasma TV. The TV, with multiscreen functions, will allow the viewer to monitor differ-

ent areas of the house, such as the kids studying in another area.

To complete the "home-sweet-home look," typical mementos such as books, golf trophies, memorabilia, local artwork, lamps, toys will also be put in. Another wall using a finer soliya would be used behind the bed.

The bathroom will also feature a flat screen TV. "This is another way of subtly saying that even within what is to be considered the most private sanctum of your house, you could actually be entertained using technology," Silvestre says.

The Windows-based software can program a series of appliances within one mode. "You just point toward your main computer and that thing will program everything at the same time," explains Silvestre.

Laurie Mae Rivera-Moreno, Microsoft's PR and community affairs manager, said the company would like to make sure it integrates its technology into the home so that people would know that it is not just used for work but for fun and making life easier.

"We refer to it as the home of the future only because the technology as of now has not yet been widely used. In terms of its availability and capabilities, it is a technology of today. All of what is going to be showcased there is actually already feasible," stresses Silvestre.

Pricy today, cheap tomorrow

Though Silvestre admits that setting up an actual home today into a "smart" one could cost an additional P2 million to P3 million (mostly due to the cost of appliances), he reiterates that "it will eventually get to the stage where it will get cheaper."

Says Silvestre: "It's like the DVD player. We've avoided DVD players for years because they cost P30,000, and now they're available for just P2,000."

He stresses that even middle income families would eventually get to this level without having to spend an enormous amount.

Silvestre explains that the basic software and technology would not add a substantial amount since it is not hard-wired but uses Wi-Fi and Internet. He estimates the cost of the infrastructure would not be more than 10 to 15 percent of the current cost.

Silvestre adds that an ordinary P8,000 color TV can comply with "smart home" requirements via "smart" outlets. An air-con that is

only remote-controlled and not Internet-connected could be reconfigured so that one could wire it to the Internet.

So, what can all these wireless technologies do for your home?

Rivera-Moreno says that with this kind of setup, you can just "call" your house, punch in a code, and automatically turn on or off any of the interconnected appliances. You want your air-con turned on before you arrive, so that the room is already cool and comfortable when you come in? Just call the house and "order" the air-con on.

Best of all, you can go back to the "Stone Age" anytime you feel like doing things the old-fashioned way.

"This doesn't have to be something that insinuates itself 100 percent into your life. You can select what you want to do. All you do is bypass the system and shut it down. But every time you need it, it's just there," says Silvestre.

And that's just perfect when your demanding in-laws go to your house unannounced. You can keep them entertained without having to be there. Near, huh?

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Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
San Ramon, Zamboanga City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
CONSTRUCTION AND CONCRETE PAVING OF ZAMBOANGA 2nd INDUSTRIAL PARK ROAD COMPLEX (SEA FRONT - PHASE II)

- The Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority (ZCSEZA), through SARO No. 0-05-07289 dated December 22, 2005, invites to apply the sum of THIRTY-FOUR MILLION EIGHTY TWO THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FORTY-ONE PESOS & 38/100 ONLY (P34,082,641.35) being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC), to payments under the contract for "Construction and Concrete Paving of ZAMBOANGA 2nd Industrial Park Road Network (Seafront-Phase II). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
- The ZCSEZA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the "Construction and Concrete Paving of ZAMBOANGA 2nd Industrial Park Road Network (Seafront-Phase II)". Bidders should possess a valid 2nd Industrial Park Road Network (Seafront-Phase II) PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract. Bidders must submit a contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit a copy of their LOI and the Eligibility Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P 200.00) on April 13-25, 2006 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY Administration Building. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on May 2, 2006 at 10:00 AM at the Audio Visual Room, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
- Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
- Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY Administration Building on or before May 2, 2006, 10:00 AM.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P2,500.00). The Bidding Documents shall be reviewed personally by the bidder or his authorized representative effective May 2, 2006 until a day before bid opening, during office hours.
- The ZCSEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on May 11, 2006 at 10:00 AM at the Audio Visual Room, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City.
- Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before May 23, 2006 at 10:00 AM.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following form:

Form of Security		Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
Cash	Certified Check, Cashiers' Check, or Manager's Check	One Percent (1%)
Bank	Letter of Credit	Two and a half Percent (2 1/2%)

Latest bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on May 23, 2006 at 10:00 AM at the Audio Visual Room, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below on May 23, 2006 at 10:00 AM.

Completion of the Works is required by 240 calendar days.

The ZCSEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) GEORGINA PANTALEON-YU
Chairman and Administrator
Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority
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 Replete with gentle, natural surroundings and exceptional amenities that one can expect from the country's leading property developer, the exclusive residential development is also a healthier alternative to urban living. It is preferred by health-conscious individuals, including a number of doctor residents who enjoy their dream homes at the distinctly peaceful subdivision.

Change of scenery

Dr. Efrén A. Jamir and wife Veni have lived in Ayala Westgrove Heights since 2001. His well-earned retirement from his 31-year private practice of general pediatrics in Florida required a change of scenery. He and his wife then returned to the Philippines, after living in the United States since 1971.

As one of several doctor residents in Ayala Westgrove Heights, Efrén finds the importance of living in a lush and pollution-free haven. He considers the number of doctors a mere coincidence, and that the actual cross-section of homeowners is diverse. They have, however, similar interests and opinions when it comes to their subdivision.

Efrén is reminded of their Florida home with their current environment. The place we lived in was like this; it has a rural setting but it was so close to the city. We lived several miles east of Orlando. In half an hour to 40 minutes, we were in Orlando; it's just like going to Alabang," he says.

Not crowded

He confides: "Initially upon my retirement, we went to Davao, and my wife went to Tagaytay to look at different locations. After that she saw the lots in Westgrove. We decided on Westgrove, because it's not crowded. Plus, it has that relaxing country setting. We immediately chose this also because my relatives live in Alabang and Imus, Cavite. We have good neighbors, and the subdivision has a friendly atmosphere."

Veni enthuses that it has many advantages over other living environments. The serene atmosphere is conducive to many activities that the numerous village clubs conduct. Ayala Property Management Corp. is also prepared to assist them should the residents need services specific to their homes or neighborhoods.

"Cleanliness is very important. We were looking for a place where we could be comfortable, where it's cool. In our old home in the US, we had trees, a lot of space and a closeness between the community members. We have a lot of friends there. It's the same here. If you need something, you know that somebody will come to your assistance," Efrén says.

The couple enjoys gardening. They have a number of decorative flowering plants in their lawn, as well as fruit-bearing trees in their back yard. But when they're not concentrating on that hobby, they do other worthwhile activities, together and with their friends.

"I do medical missions," shares Efrén. "That's when we do free checkups, and dispense medicine samples to those who need them."

Very relaxing

Their Seattle-based son visited them last year and found the place very relaxing. Says Efrén: "He loved it. He loved the area, and he told us that he wants the house! It reminds him of Florida. When we lived there, instead of mango trees, we had orange trees. We're also looking forward to our three grandchildren, they'll enjoy the nearby playground and the clubhouse swimming pool."

The doctor offers that being part of this growing community has exceeded all their expectations: "Ayala Land has been excellent. You can trust them," Veni adds, "I don't think we'll ever leave Westgrove. We're very happy here!"

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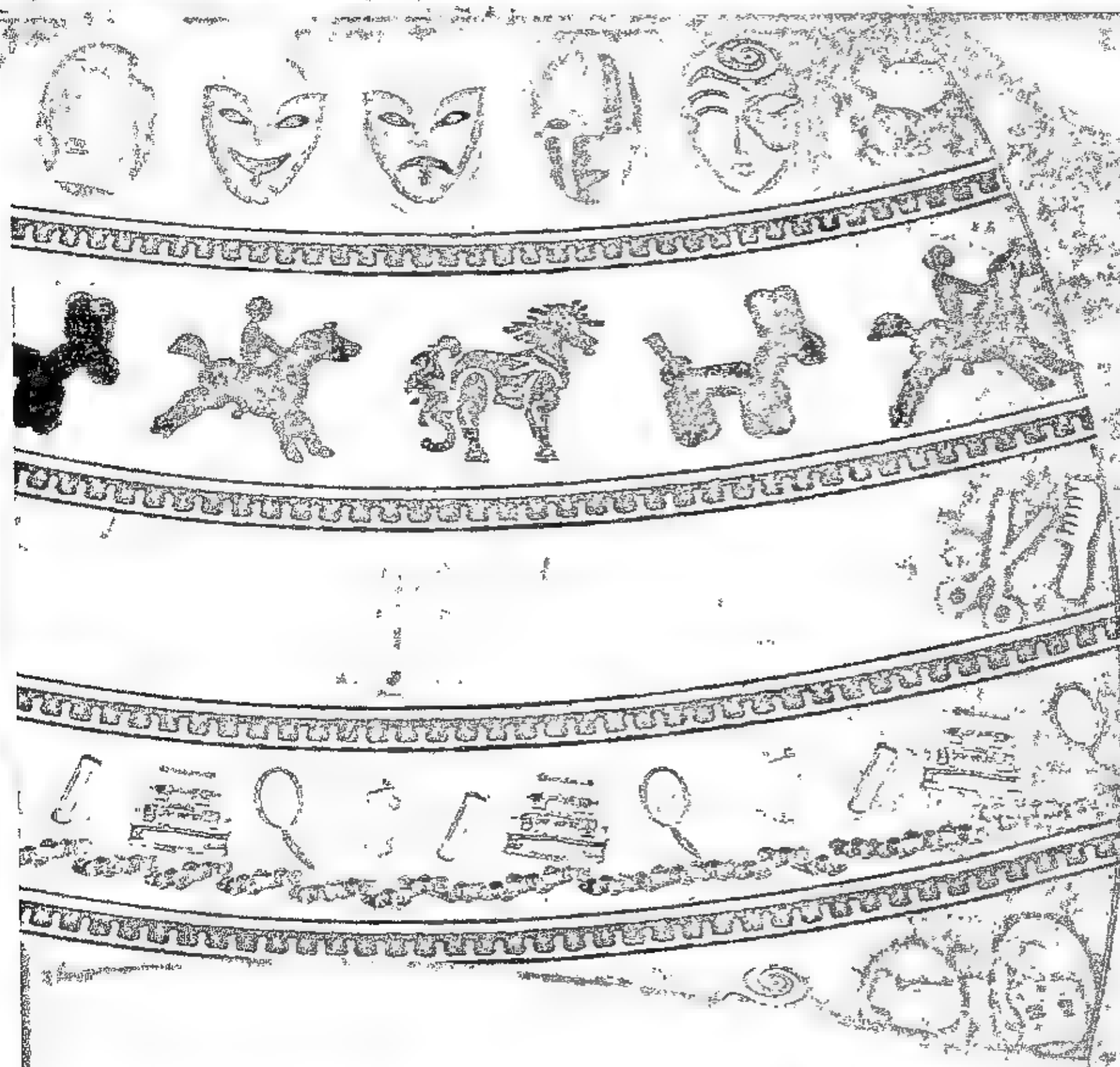
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- Balloon Twisting
- Face Painting
- Egg Painting

TOWN PLAZA
April 16, 2006
3 - 5 pm

- Pony Ride
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Balloon Twisting
- Face Painting

AYALA CENTER
April 16, 2006
10 am - 2 pm

- Mad Science Show
- Timexzone Rides
- Body Glitter
- Kiddo's 1st Anniversary Celebration
- Free Balloons
- Free Loot Bags

MARKET
ACTIVITY CENTER
April 16, 2006
11 am - 2 pm

- Easter Egg Venture
- Face Painting
- Glitter Tattoos
- Kids' Salon
- Magic Show
- Acrobats and Jugglers
- Easter Egg Design Contest

Pinoy Big Brother (fill in the blank) Edition!

From page C4

Pinoy Big Brother: Brother Edition

Featuring the Eigenmanns, the Monteros, and the Quizon (there are 50 million of 'em) this special edition will have a very special tagline: "Si Kuya, Kuya mo talaga!"

The big winner gets, in the words of Keanu Reeves, "a big weaner."

Sponsored by Brothers Burger.

Pinoy Big Brother: Metro Body Calendar Edition

Never mind the crap the MTRCB's gonna raise over this, this is a ratings draw. And there is an edge to this idea: ancillary sales (DVD, iTunes, cable rights) I hear the "Girls Gone Wild" guy is so rich now, he's thinking of buying Playboy. This'd definitely bandage ABS' profit wound. *Wala lang*

Pinoy Big Brother: Fish Edition

This comes from the genius that was Sky Cable's aquarium channel. I kid you not, there was an aquarium channel, and it obviously was ahead of its time. Watching PBB Fish Edition would kinda be like watching ANC, but you'd pick an arowana over Ricky Carandang any day, wouldn't you?

This show's easy to produce, it doesn't cost much, and ABS won't have to worry about giving airtime to "PBB: Fish Edition" housemates. Oh yeah, and it promotes eco-consciousness.

Pinoy Big Brother: Indie Edition

59 days locked in Cubao X. But here's the twist: instead of stocking the place with nothing, forcing the housemates to make art out of, um, nothing, we give them state of the art recording equipment, Mics, and all the silk screen material they'll ever need (provided they stamp a little logo in somewhere). And here's an interesting challenge: We'll force them to pray to billboard-sized pictures of Gabby Lopez. Yeah.

The Big Winner gets a nice cubicle at the PBB writer's office.

If you think these stipulations are going to throw indie people off, you're wrong. Everyone wants to call themselves indie these days.

Pinoy Big Brother: Nginig Edition

Why isn't this on the air yet? All we need is a haunted house—one in New Manila's



fine—and 16 people brave enough to face ghosts like Antonette Taus, the mean fat girl

from "Sarah ang Munting Prinsesa," and Stefano Mori. (Oh, they aren't... Oh. Ok. Scratch that.)

Pinoy Big Brother: Rehab Edition

Imagine all these housemates with withdrawal symptoms—killing each other, eating the furniture, passing on themselves. Imagine the drama we can get in the confession room. Imagine where we can go with the challenges. The press release will read, "This show features the plight of drug addicts. It will show the youth to stay away drugs." See, nothing for you moms and dads to worry about.

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Pinoy Big Brother (fill in the blank) Edition!

Text and images by Pepe Diokno

I DON'T WANNA BE THE guy who breaks it to you die-hard Pinoy Big Brother fans. (You know, you guys who got ZPDee just for PBB 24/7.) But I have conclusive evidence that Pinoy Big Brother is about to die.

The Celebrity Edition just finished, and Teen Edition's coming up. Think about it: Survivor didn't go the celebrity route until its eighth edition (with Survivor All Stars), and the Amazing Race didn't go kiddie until season eight (with the Family edition).

TV shows like to shake things up to keep audiences interested. You know, 'coz concepts get stale. Pinoy Big Brother is on "we must keep people interested" mode on its second season.

That may mean two things. One, that its producers sense the show's going down the toilet and they need to pump it up; and two, that the producers are dumb and aren't playing their cards right.

I'm for option two.

But regardless of whether the show is going down the toilet, I also have proof that PBB's eating itself alive, and it won't last four more seasons. See.

If ABS-CBN averages three seasons a year, they're going to have to come up with three extra shows a year just to showcase former PBB talents. (Can you imagine three more shows like "Gudtaym?" I bet you don't want to.)

By season five next year, there will be nearly 100 former housemates—nearly 100 new Kapamilyas. They really can't fit everyone on Channel 2, but what if their Recycle Bin, Studio 23, fills up as well?

There's going to be such an abun-

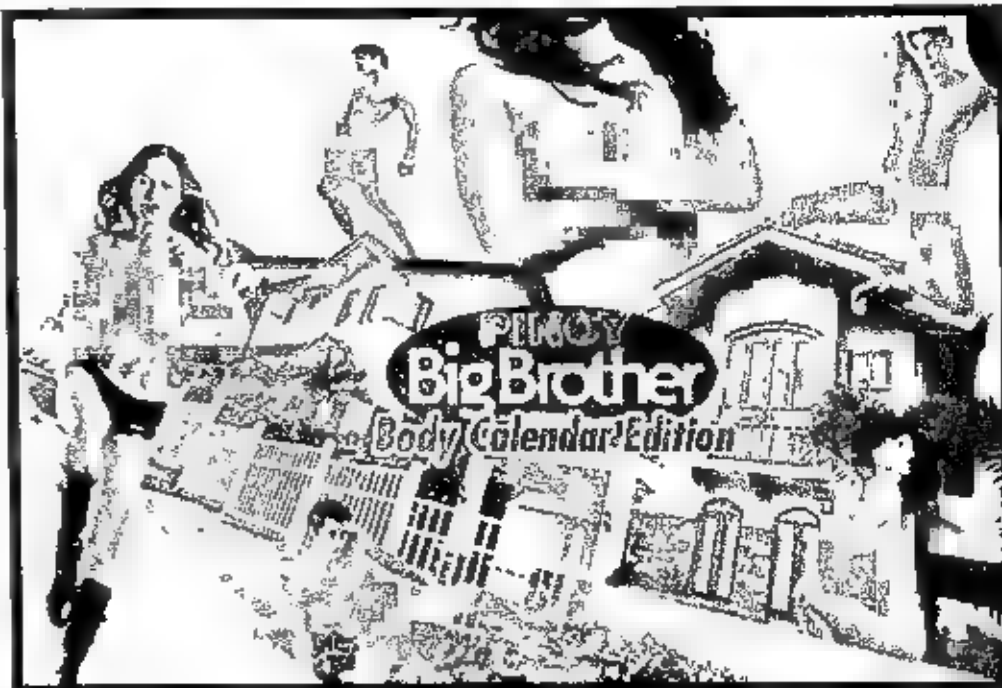
dance of former housemates that by season five, ABS-CBN will have no choice but to shut down PBB.

And if they do manage to juggle all their former housemates, it just proves the saying, "Reality stars get 10 minutes of fame. On ABS-CBN they get 0.864." That's not good for the network, is it?

See, it's definite disaster for PBB. The only way for the scenarios above not to happen is if PBB reaches its saturation point by season three. (But that is a big possibility.)

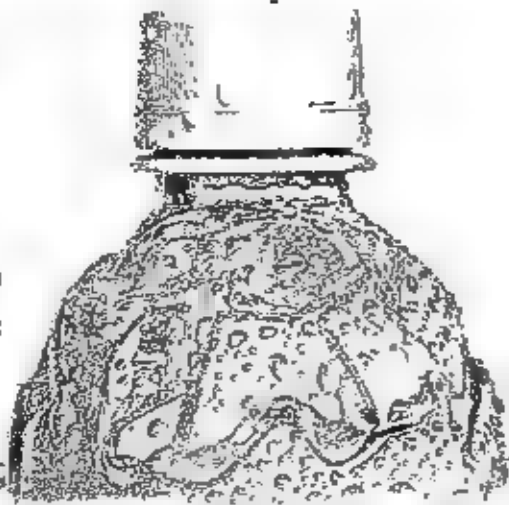
However, I have a soft spot for ABS-CBN (because GMA 7 reminds me of Ethel Booba, Diego, the Sex Bomb Dancers, and other random fuglies), so I decided to help them out. I took a night off from normalcy to brainstorm for possible editions of PBB. Here's a short list of what I've come up with. (If you want the other 7,842 ideas, give me a call. And money.)

PINOY/C3



PHOTOS: FROM THE 2005 PETRO BODY CALENDAR WITH CANYON WOODS AS BACKGROUND

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I Know What to Do This Summer

Now that summer's made its scaring presence felt and school has become a memory, you've got to find creative ways to stay occupied—and stay cool. We've compiled this list of summer must-dos, just so you can say *I know what to do this summer*.

Discover a secret beach. Summer always equals the beach, and with our 7,000-plus islands, you're sure to find some secluded paradise. So whip yourself into bikini-shape, gather the friends (or venture off solo!), pack up your Lonely Planet and ride off into an adventure. Just make sure you slather on some sunblock.

Get wet. If you've spent most of your life as a landlubber, then it's about time you get more than your toes wet! Try wakeboarding at Caliraya, scuba diving in Anilao, parasailing in Boracay, surfing in Siargao, kayaking in Palawan...the list is endless. Aside from the cool factor—you can casually say, "Oh, I was surfing last weekend,"—you also get to see the world in a different light.

Go to the zoo. Make some new friends of the furry, feathered and scaly kind. Avilon Zoo in Montalban or even good old Manila Zoo in Manila can be a fun way to spend the day. Plus you get to learn more about the creatures that we share our world with. This eye-opening experience will also melt your heart towards the plight of the endangered species.

Take a class. Be it painting, baking, writing, dancing, jewelry-making or even underwater basket weaving, use this down time to turn yourself into a more rounded person. And when school comes around, you can dazzle your friends with the new-and-improved you.

Read! Just to keep your brain from stagnating, make sure you take a book with you wherever you go. And when you whip out your *Catcher in the Rye* on the beach, it could even start a conversation with that gorgeous intel. actual on the blanket next to you.

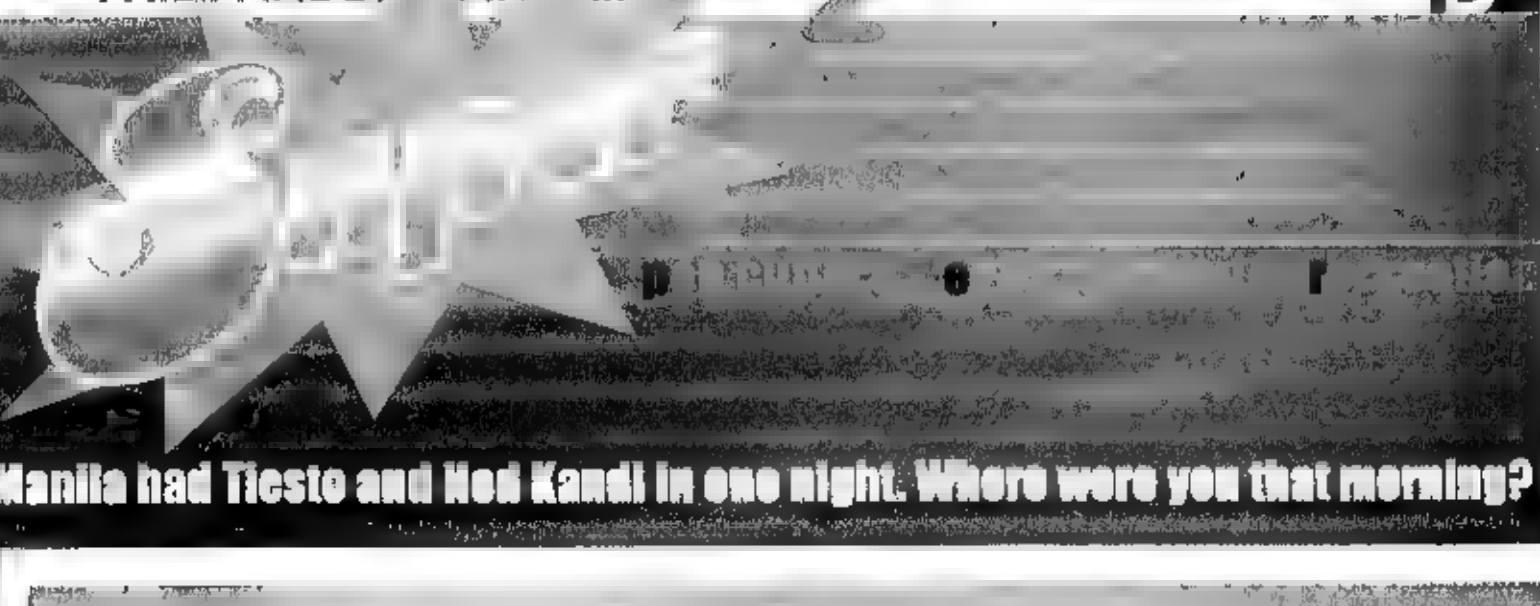
Volunteer for a cause. Sign up with organizations like Gawad Kalinga, PAWS, WWF (that's Wildlife, not Wrestling), or your neighborhood community center and be a person for others! You'll discover that you receive more than you give.

Feel the rush. No matter what you get into this summer, make sure it's something you'd enjoy. That way, you're sure to feel that rush of maximizing your potential while making the most of your time. Now to get another kind of rush, try the new Nestea Ice.

It's your favorite iced tea, ready to drink and oh-so-fashionably portable in its hip plastic bottle. Beyond ice cold, it has this unique chilling sensation that chills you from inside out. In fact, it can make you shiver! And you have a choice of Nestea Ice Lemon Iced Tea and Nestea Ice Lemon Green Tea. Available nationwide, Nestea Ice is the summer must-have.

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RIDING ON THE POPULARITY of fantaseries airing on television today, X-RAY returns to feature the sexiest heroes primetime has to offer.

Top billing the roster of fantasy men is none other than Encantadia star, Alfred Vargas. After winning GMA 7's coveted Viewers Choice Awards for Sexiest Male Actor, Alfred brandishes his hunky appeal in a special X-RAY shoot. This time, he goes all the way—proving that he is truly a sex symbol of our time. Also included is teen heartthrob, Jake Cuenca who is part of GMA7's new fantaserye, *Majika*. Jake sheds his clothes for the first time—showing all his fans that he is all grown up. He banishes his awkward boyish body to exhibit a body fit for a future underwear model.

Joining the elite fantasy roster as well is Arthur Sohnap, Alfred Vargas'



JAKE takes the cake.

comrade-at-arms in Encantadia. Arthur is set to make his own mark in the local showbiz scene as he plays a bigger and more pivotal role when the fantaserye hit returns. He works out daily in preparation for his role and he reveals this well-toned body exclusively in X-RAY. Also look out for Justin

Cuyugan of Etheria. The tall, dark and handsome actor had no qualms in starring in a pictorial where he portrays a boyfriend who videotapes himself for his girlfriend's pleasure.

The jam-packed issue includes other stars like Biboy Ramirez, Jake Roxas and Kris Martinez, a showbiz newcomer who was a former Close Up To Fame finalist. Lastly, Starstruck Ultimate Survivor Mike Tan goes shirtless only for X-RAY.

Wait no longer for the anticipated return of X-RAY featuring sixty pages of pictures showcasing the finest photography in the country today. Also included is a special folded insert featuring five hot male models.

X-RAY Number Two is available only in select stores starting April 7. Get your copy for only P380 from CV Magazine in Landmark, Fully Booked, Biblarch, Papyrus, Buñi and Filbars outlets. X-RAY is published by X-RAY Media Publications.



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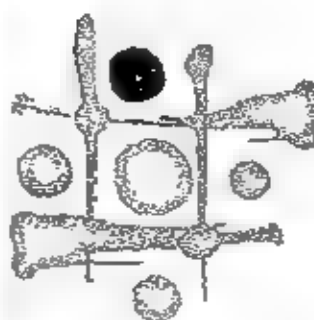
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ing to other DJs without get
ed
all the things you're doing in
st for world domination, do
have time for family and
are you always in the studio?
in the studio and concerts
the world. That's the hard
out it. But my friends travel
in my tours so it's a good thing

among your colleagues do
up to?
re a couple of DJs in Holland
coming up strong—like DJ
man
do you think about the
es?
re very warm, very educated
efinitely love dance music!

Thanks to World Wide Womb

Key words: *Chlorophyll*, *Chlorophyll fluorescence*, *Chlorophyll fluorescence*, *Chlorophyll fluorescence*, *Chlorophyll fluorescence*



PMAP'S MODELYMPICS 2006

Going for the gold ... Model

I STOOD NERVOUSLY ON THE beachfront with my teammates as the other teams exchanged joking taunts at each other.

"Be prepared for some ass-whooping, girlslash," Bianca Valerio told me, confident with Mr. Sports Unlimited himself, Marc Nelson, on her team.

"Eat our dust ... I mean sand," I retorted dorkily.

Beyond the runway

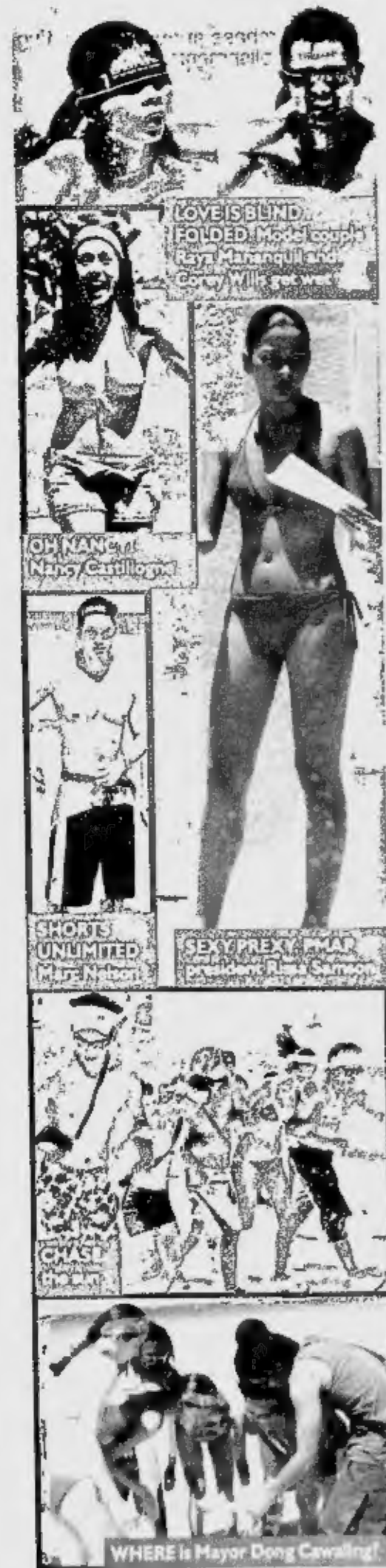


Raya Mananquil

It was March 31st in Boracay, where PMAP models, directors, designers and celebrities have gathered together to compete in the Modelympics. It would have been far easier if the tasks we performed went along the lines of our profession: A hair and makeup relay followed by a quick change into your haute couture and finally working the catwalk towards the finish line. However thanks to the folks of Extra Challenge, they gave us one hell of a grueling island race.

Amidst the hooting, I could smell sunscreen

GOING/ E3



LOVE IS BLIND: FOLDED MODELS couple Raya Mananquil and Cory Villalva

OH NANCY! Nancy Castillano

SHORTS UNLIMITED Marc Nelson

SEXY PREXY PMAP Designer Rhea Samson

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Special Ed. Aveo 1.5 M/T	835,000	89,000	58,392	34,530	26,777	19,050	15,268	7,610
Special Ed. Aveo 1.5 A/T	875,000	79,000	52,062	36,381	28,136	20,066	16,075	8,069
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Optra 1.6 LS A/T	770,000	89,000	60,630	41,546	32,218	22,928	18,367	9,228
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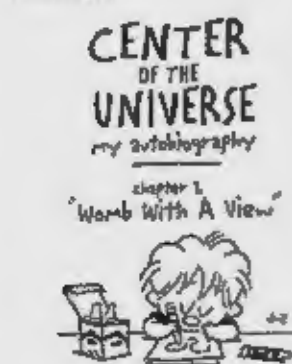


MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY RM. JUNIOR



BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're socially aware. You believe in giving back to society. People respect your conscientiousness and ethics. (You're quite philosophical.) No matter how popular you are, many of you are shy; nevertheless, you keep your head in a crisis. You have a strong sense of justice. You always fight for what is right. The year ahead promotes all partnerships and close relationships.

Birthdate of: Patricia Arquette, actress; Betty Ford, former first lady; Kofi Annan, UN secretary general.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be patient with others today. Be careful when driving or walking. Explosive tempers can cause discussions to turn quickly into arguments. Not good!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Ego conflicts are inevitable. Either you are trying to control the activities of someone or somebody is trying to do this to you. Either way, it's meddling.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conflict with a friend or a member of a group is likely today. Why not just step aside? After all, it takes two to make a fight.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Power struggles about money are likely today. There could be disputes about who owns what or who is responsible for what. Try to keep a low profile, if you can.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have ideas about how to improve things at work; others don't agree. Don't get into loggerheads about this. Maybe you have to agree to disagree.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Conflict with authority figures is highly possible today. Try to avoid this. You don't have to agree with bosses, parents and VIPs, but you don't have to openly disagree with them either.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might be so keen to express your views about religious, spiritual or political matters that you end up alienating others. Is this worth it? (Ask yourself this.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Avoid dangerous neighborhoods today. Don't tempt any situation that encourages crime or violence. There is an element of this strongly present today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Use your patience and your diplomacy to deal with partners and close friends today. Other people are pushy with you. Don't be pushy back. Pushy on both sides just leads to unhappiness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't expect co-workers to agree with your ideas for reform or improving where you work. They might, or they might not. You have to respect this.

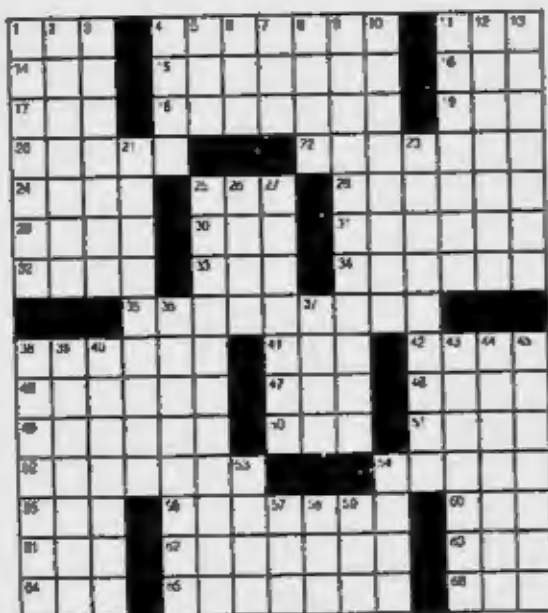
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might feel obsessed about artistic or romantic subjects today. Don't get carried away. You won't be thinking straight. Just do nothing. (People are too intense.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have tons of energy to make improvements to where you live today. If you live alone, this is fine. If you live with others, try to respect their wishes as well.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Faucet
- 4 Shaw play, "Major..."
- 12 Carpentry tool
- 14 Tint
- 15 Commanded
- 16 Big galoot
- 17 Mess up
- 18 More mean
- 19 Yap or kisser
- 20 Dine at home
- 22 Tree-worshiper
- 24 Aida or Bates
- 25 Call off
- 26 Sloped-roof shelter
- 29 Cut
- 30 Bossy's greeting
- 31 Draw air
- 32 Actress Daly
- 33 Clairvoyant's letters
- 34 Chewed (on)
- 35 Sinder's car
- 38 Writer Christie
- 41 Feedbag grain
- 42 Say it... sol
- 46 One of the Hemingways
- 47 Avail oneself of
- 48 Play lead
- 49 Did some carpentry work
- 50 Five after five
- 51 Dislike intensely
- 52 Country settled by freed slaves
- 54 One of a sailing trio
- 55 Watch of "The Magrillmont Seven"
- 56 Begin, for one
- 60 Upper limit
- 61 Possessor's domain
- 62 Blight victim
- 63 Corner pipe
- 64 2,000 pounds
- 65 Ushers after intermission
- 66 Needle feature



By Tom Price
Chicago, IL

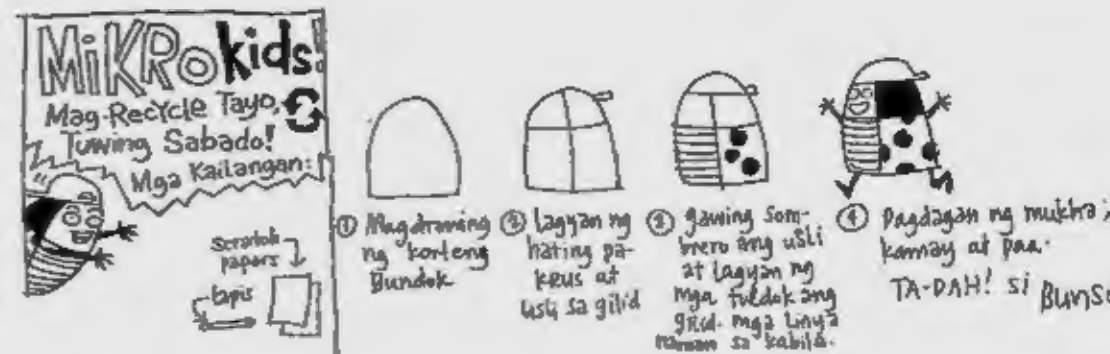
Friday's Puzzle Solver



- 2 By ear
- 3 Relate
- 4 Small town in Germany?
- 5 Southern constellation
- 6 Hways
- 7 Ticket at a racetrack
- 8 Song by Puccini
- 9 Preach to the choir, in a way
- 10 Actress Barbeau
- 11 Bay of Lake Huron
- 12 Disciple
- 13 Like many aquatic animals
- 14 Segment of an alimortary canal
- 15 Hindu teacher of mysticism
- 16 Nickname for Ireland
- 17 Honker
- 18 Get the skinny
- 19 Happler
- 20 Instance
- 21 Most species
- 22 Italian astronomer
- 23 Horse breed
- 24 Marvel Comics man
- 25 How fops are dressed
- 26 Foot-operated lever
- 27 Lethal weapon
- 28 Meat or fruit dishes
- 29 Gobblet up
- 30 Bullpen stat
- 31 Do-over tennis service

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

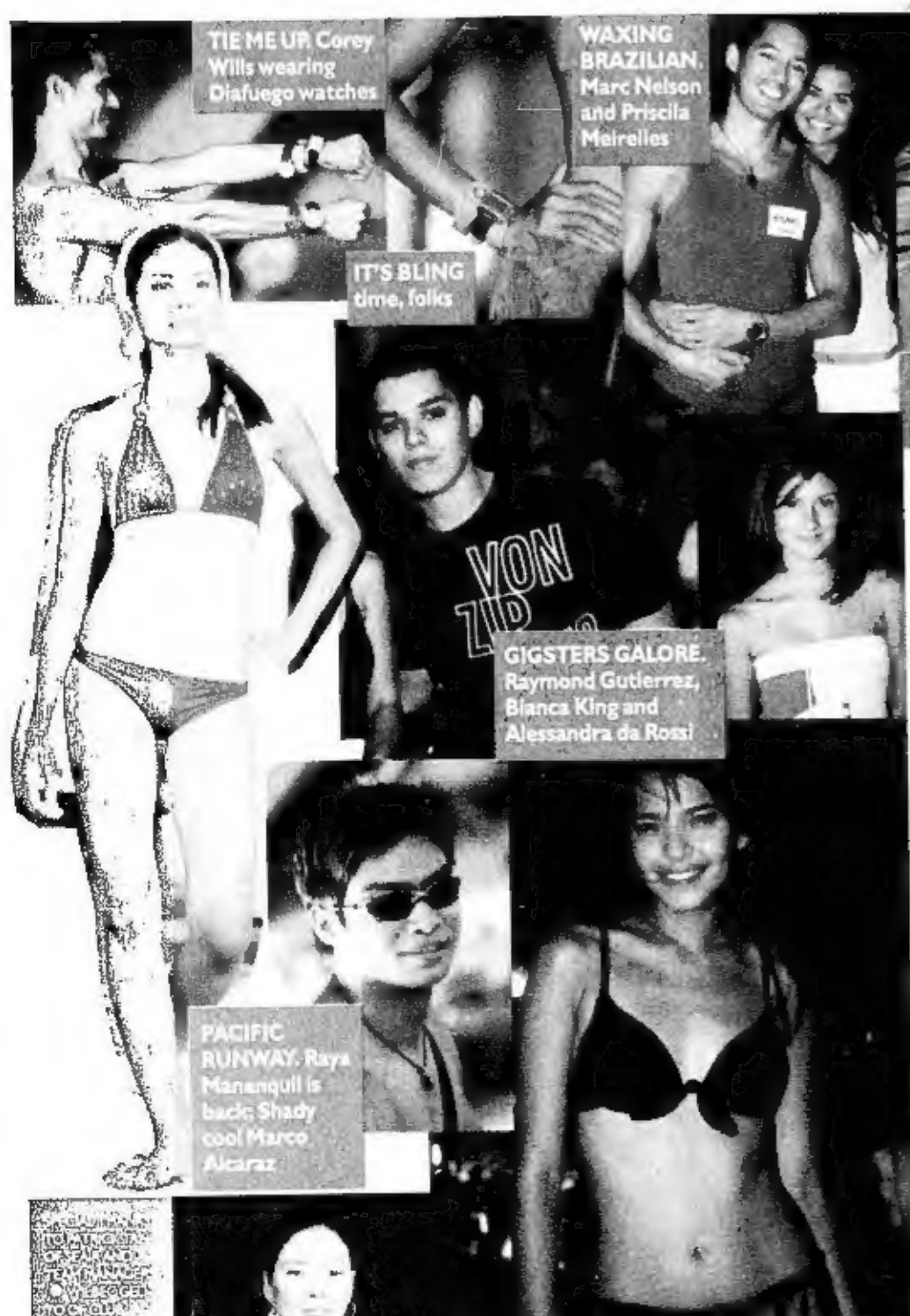
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING





TIE ME UP: Corey Wills wearing Diafuego watches

WAXING BRAZILIAN: Marc Nelson and Priscilla Meirelles

IT'S BLING time, folks

BORACAY Mayor Dong Cawaling with the top models of our time

Boracay's Forever Summer has started via PMAP's Modelympics—a project of Mayor Dong Cawaling

GIGSTERS GALORE: Raymond Gutierrez, Bianca King and Alessandra da Rossi

PACIFIC RUNWAY: Raya Mananquil is back! Shady cool Marco Alcaraz

Going for the gold ... model

From page E1

lotion mixed with sweat caused by the anticipation of the game. Each team was to race on foot to 12 different resorts and perform a task in each one in no particular order. Our strategy was to start with the farthest resort working our way back to the finish line. Thanks to fellow teammate Bianca King, who knew Boracay like the back of her hand, she managed to lead us to each resort without a second lost.

I felt like we were part of a reality TV show, as the camera crew of my other teammate Raymond Gutierrez followed. During the race, we would run across several teams, some determined to get to their next stop, others happy to distract their competitors. A person from the other team stopped Raymond and requested for a photo op mid-race, which caused him to be left behind.

"It's a delaying tactic!" I laughed as I grabbed the young star and ran.

From climbing bamboo poles, filling buckets with seawater to swimming—each task brought out the fun, competitive edge in everyone. Jing Monis suffered from muscle cramps but nevertheless pulled through for his blue team, finishing 1st runner-up. Robby Carmona, also from the blue team, couldn't complain. As he jokingly mentioned before the start of the race, "I'm a jinx! I always lose in these island races!"

As each team made it to the finish line, many couldn't help but collapse in the sand and smile, for they knew that despite their aching body and blistered feet, tonight they would ease the pain with a drink or two.

Thanks to South East Asian Airlines for getting everyone to Caticlan in just 35 minutes; to Rockwell, for supporting the Professional Models Association of the Philippines in organizing the Modelympics; to the office of the Mayor of Malay, for letting us celebrate the start of summer in Boracay; and to Cyma, for the excellent Greek food to suit my vegetarian palate.

E-mail the author: eatyourtofu@yahoo.com

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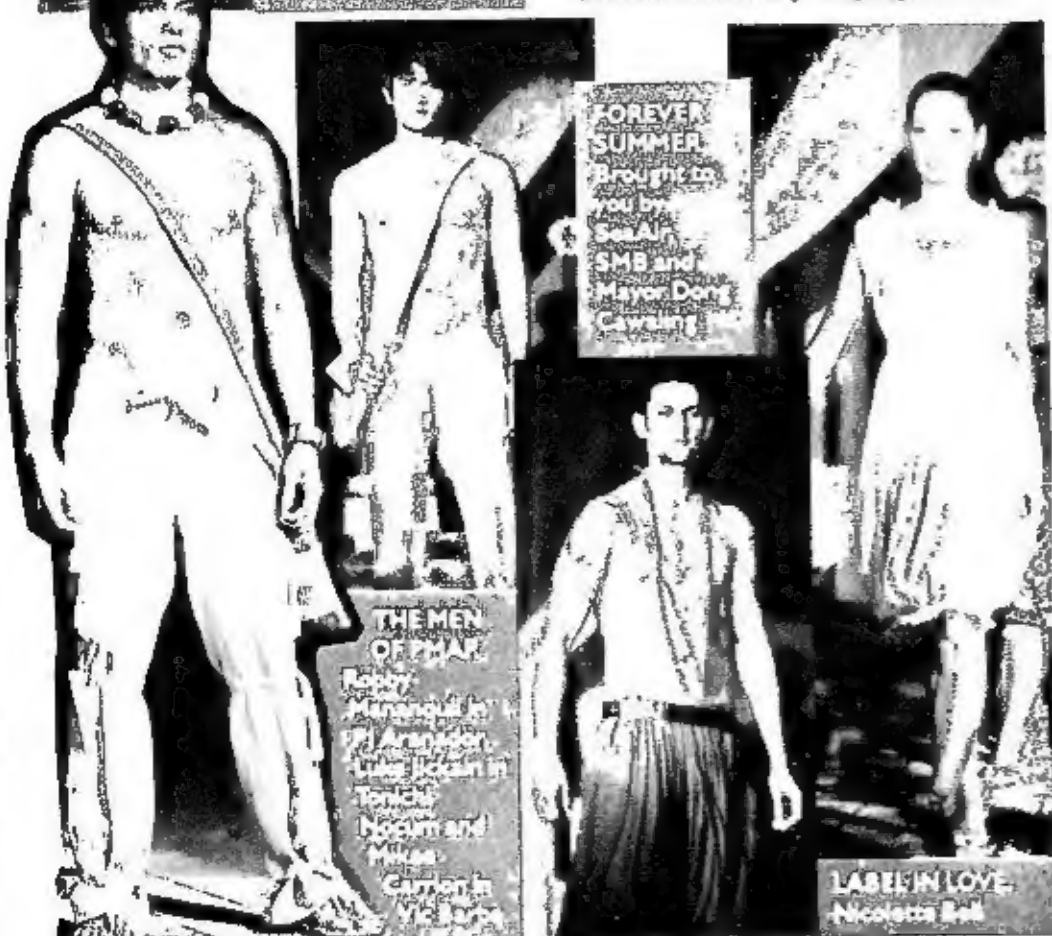
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THE MEN OF PHIL
Raymond Gutierrez, Bianca King, Alessandra da Rossi

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Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz



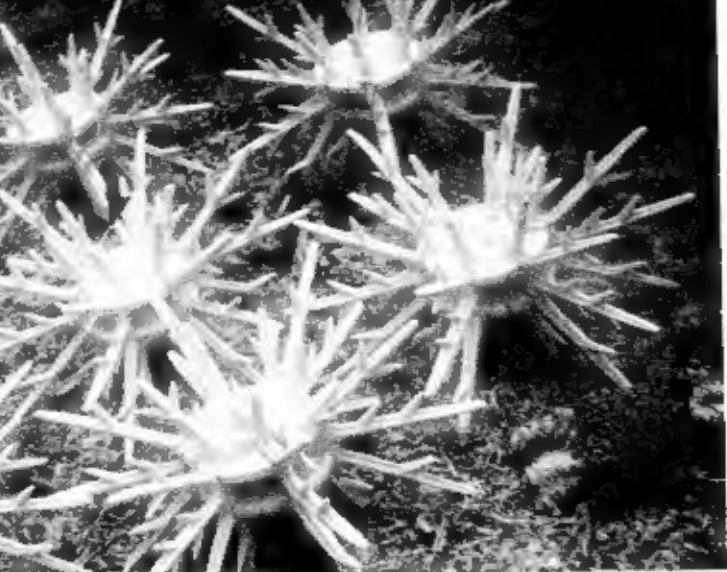
NAVIGATING THE NEVER-ENDING weekend known as my life, I recently dropped anchor at the sun-flooded tourism outpost of El Nido—Español for "The Nido," wink—to indulge my eco warrior wannabe fantasies. Saving the seas is just one of the things I do in my downtime—even if it's from the comfort of the infinity pool in my mind—and boy, was I in luck. Together with authentic ocean junkies, I witnessed a scientific splash like nothing I've ever seen on "Bay-watch," among other shore things.

Sea + ecology = Seacology, baby

"We all need some good news," so goes Leigh Perez. She participated in an EcoReef installation in Indonesia and decided to take the excellent idea home to the Philippines. On behalf of the El Nido Foundation, she wrote a proposal to Seacology, a US-based nonprofit environmental organization that seeks to preserve the "highly en-

Reef madness!

Working with the El Nido Foundation, the helpful souls at Seacology are reviving underwater life on little islands at a time



AHOY, DUDE. Me, two shades darker
PHOTOS BY GINO DE LA PAZ

CLASSIC ROCK
250 million-year-old limestone formations

OH MY, scary-eyed surprise

dangered biodiversity of islands throughout the world."

You see, in our attention deficit democracy, it's disturbingly easy to forego environmental issues in favor of economic ones. Seacology, however, shoots for "win-win situations where both the local environment is protected and islanders receive some tangible benefit for doing so." What's that? I hear Nemo screaming "Hooray!"

"The beauty of the Philippines is second to none. It's very fragile," observes Duane Silverstein, Seacology executive director. Dynamite fishing and other illegal methods have banded up Palawan's coral reefs. And when ethereal aquatic cradles like that get trashed, the marine creatures that call it home kick the bucket as well. Of course, it's never too late to pitch in.

Underwater snowflakes

By all means, reef regeneration is not a quick thing. In the past, other environmental NGOs have used structures made out of tires as artificial reefs. Some groups have even parked wrecked cars and parts of ships to facilitate coral restoration. The downside? First of all, rubber tires leach nasty chemicals, so they could act more as booby-traps than lifesavers. Boo. Second, while sunken ships and the like make for interesting underwater vistas, they are sadly out of sync with the natural environment. After all, the sea is not a junkyard.

Fortunately, the multi-pronged EcoReef modules that Seacology has donated and subsequently mounted do not resemble Michelin tires or your mom's old Volvo. Instead, they are pH-neutral ceramic formations that resemble bigass snowflakes.

"Marine biologists are still experimenting with the shape of the module that works," continues Duane. But judging the thriving coral and fish population in Bunaken National Park, Indonesia, the world's first EcoReef installation site, location number 2, El Nido, should reap the same benefits.

Sea and be seen

"Palawan is special because it has over 1,700 of the country's 7,107 islands," shares Alberto Lim, president of Ten Knots Development Corporation, the company behind El Nido Resorts. Kid-dos, wrap your brains around that for a second.

Strong community involvement is key when it comes to endeavors like this one. Whether it's cheering on the volunteer divers or teaching the youth about the importance of coral reefs in sustaining fish biomass in the area, local El Nido residents have jumped into the coral reef restoration and education project, promising long-term benefits for everyone.

That Sunday, I watched the Seacology dudes do their thing, lowering and latching down 100 EcoReefs in the marine area surrounding three uninhabited islands, Tres Marias. A total of 626 EcoReef modules are earmarked for this area, with subsequent installations planned on May 20, May 27, June 3, and June 10, 2006.

Being a noncertified diver (I was hung over during an intro dive years ago so I was traumatized and gave up completely), I merely observed the event from a nearby boat. But—surprise!—it was enough to revive my appreciation for nature. Yup, I realized all that while swaying to the rhythmic whirling of the ocean and singing off-key to the tunes in my iPod. Seasickness rocks!

Mental souvenirs

Back at the resort, I found my sea legs and jogged back to the dozen or so diversions I experienced that weekend.

Number one was a kayaking expedition around the small lagoon in Miniloc Island. Surrounded by limestone cliffs and a posse of gangsta jellyfish, that brief visit yielded awesome meditative rewards.

Second was my pitstop at Vigan Island, known popularly as Snake Island. The slightly craggy landscape gave way to the sapphire sea, which in turn lapped the soft, creamy sand. I was on my best behavior then so I resisted the urge to hurl a live starfish around like a boomerang. "Best behavior," in this case, meant "Ritalin." Kidding.

Rounding off my list was a three-way tie: Sunset cocktails at Pangulasian Island, a private dinner at Entalula Island, and my suite at El Nido Resorts Lagen Island. I know—you can take the kid out of the city but you can't take the city out of the kid. After a couple days of learning, like, important stuff about the environment, it was cool to be pampered and get the hang of doing nothing again.

Redefining the word "retreat," the few days I spent as a scintillatingly sunburned busybody around the islands of El Nido were both relaxing and enlightening. The world we live in is as old as history and as new as next week; as its owners, we should do what we can to take care of it, pinching a few mental souvenirs along the way.

Check out www.seacology.org, www.ecoreefs.com, and www.elnidorresorts.com. For questions on the El Nido EcoReefs Project, contact Maius Marcelo, executive director, El Nido Foundation at ircmarcelo@hotmail.com or tel. (632) 687-1799.

To book your stay at El Nido Resorts, contact Ten Knots Development Corporation, 2/F Builders Centre Building, 170 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Tel. (632) 894-5644 Fax. (632) 810 3620. For flight reservations call Island Transvay, Inc. Tel. (632) 851-5674. Ayos!



SHORE THING
Pangulasian Island at high noon



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